

MILITARY Miniatures

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IN REVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Fantastic Plastic!



RUBBER DUCK!
FLOATING THE NEW
ITALERI AMPHIBIAN

MMiR:
soon to
be a major
motion
picture!



**Pygmy Panzer: the new
and diminutive Tristar
Panzer I Ausf. A**

**Updating an old trooper:
the Tamiya M113 ACAV**

**Makin' Trakz: the
LVTA2 conversion**

**Geschütz That! A
new look for an old kit**

**Comrade farmer and his big
gun: the Russian 203mm
Howitzer and S-65 tractor**

**The Marder
marches on!
Examining
Tamiya's latest
rendition**

**Ford Truck Man: building
the Ford WOT2 truck**
**A little Gem from the East:
building the Trumpeter BJ-212A**

**WILL THE REAL
M41A3 PLEASE
STAND UP?**
Comparing the AFV Club
and Skybow M41A3 Walker
Bulldog Light Tank kits

\$9.95 CANADA \$15.95

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No. **31**

Miniatures

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IN REVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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ON THE COVER:

Oh, did you hear? There's nothing new coming out in plastic... Ha! Just look at all this cool stuff. We've got six, count 'em, six brand new plastic kits to review this time. And, you know what? There's ton's more next time, too. Coverage of Tamiya's current version of the Marder starts on page 34.





From Your Editor

Did anyone else out there get excited when they heard that there was a television program called "AFV"? Much to my dismay, "AFV" did not denote "Armored Fighting Vehicles," but rather "America's Funniest Videos." I have written a very strongly worded letter to the president of ABC television and I'm sure I'll hear from him soon...

Hey, we had another very successful Euro Tour. In addition to attending the Euro Militaire event, we also took a whirlwind tour of Omaha Beach and the American Cemetery at Couville sur Mare. We had a brief stop at the famous Longues Battery and a quick peek at the remaining Mulberries, too. A full report of our trip and the Euro competition will follow in issue 32.

Next year's trip is already in the works. Although the arrangements are still being made, I can give you a sketch of what I envision as the final package.

I am calling this trip "The Triple Crown of German Armor Museums" and it goes like this. We will all depart the U.S. on September 18th (Thursday) of 2003 and arrive in London on the 19th and then travel on to Folkstone. We will stay at the same hotel as last year (the

wonderfully staffed Hotel Lismore) and as usual, Friday will be devoted to rest and recovery. We will attend the Euro Militaire show the following day and also spend Saturday night at the Lismore.

Sunday morning will be devoted to a bit more snooping and shopping and we will depart the show at around 1:30 pm for Gatwick airport. From Gatwick we will fly to Frankfurt, Germany where we will board a deluxe motor coach (a bus) to the small town of Münster. This is about 140 miles from Frankfurt (225-km) and we will spend Sunday night in Münster prior to visiting the museum at Münsterlager, the present day location of "Panzer Lehr," the armored warfare training battalion. Their collection is not huge, but it contains a number of fascinating vehicles, both modern and WW2. Some of the WW2 German vehicles have been restored and are now runners. The museum also has a great collection of military memorabilia, including Rommel's tunic and field marshal's baton. We may also get a tour of the base and a closer look at a Leopard, if it can be arranged.

After touring the museum and base, we will depart Münster and make the approximately 75-mile (120-km) journey to Koblenz, where we will spend Monday night. In addition to being a really nice place, it is the location of the Wehrtechnische Studienammlung Bundesamt. The Bundesamt is a bit like the U.S. Ordnance Museum at Aberdeen, but all inside. They have a vast collection of armor, much of it in fully restored and running condition. Highlights are the RSO/Pak 40, a Panzerjäger I, a Wespe and an amazingly complete late Panther G. The collection also contains artillery and small arms. Their "unofficial" book store (actually a privately owned shop around the corner) is a terrific source of hard to find titles.

Before you have a chance to recover, late Tuesday afternoon our deluxe motor coach will whisk us 80 miles (125-km) to the charming German City of Heidelberg. I could blow this whole editorial talking about Heidelberg, but we are spending Tuesday night there so that Wednesday morning we can visit the Auto+Technik Museum in Sinsheim. This is a short drive from Heidelberg City center, about 22 miles (35 km) depending on where we stay. Sinsheim has an impressive display of WW2 vehicles, but it also contains a large collection of historical cars and aircraft.

Wednesday night is spent in Heidelberg and the general idea would be to make the short hop to the Frankfurt airport Thursday morning for our various flights home. This is only about 38 miles from Heidelberg (60 km).

Of course, with the weekend looming, we could always extend our stay in Heidelberg a day or two, for sight seeing and beer "shopping."

As I said, this is just a sketch. I have yet to confirm the plans with our tour provider, Virgin Atlantic. But don't forget, Virgin can always customize your tour to include extra days on either end of the proposed schedule. Heidelberg is a great base for day trips to other areas of Germany, by either train or car.

If this trip piques your interest, please feel free to contact me by phone, fax or e-mail. I'm asking for only the truly interested to inquire, as I am placing a few more restrictions on deposits and reservation deadlines. When the plans are nailed down, we will begin advertising the trip in issue 32 and perhaps even do a subscriber mailing.

—Pat Stansell



Willkommen to issue 31

Wow, talk about your plastic paradise. We've got six new styrene vehicles to take a look at, including the new Panzer I and the two M41 kits. All this still comes with our usual look at other stuff. This issue is so jam-packed, that the Idea Bank will take a short hiatus, returning in issue 32. 2003 is also going to be a jam-packed year. We currently have more than 30 models either completed as reviews, or in the process. With all the new stuff coming out, we are constantly rolling articles into the following issue. No worries, though, we will get it all in there—eventually!

Dangerous Dana

The massively multi-media kit from PanzerShop.

Swedish Meatballs

The hot new Swedish S-Tanks from Trumpeter, reviewed back to back.

Little Big Man

Tamiya's large and in charge 1/16th scale Pershing gets built and detailed.



COMING SOON TO MMIR:

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Magazine Boy

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The Mail Sack



Hank's Shank part deux

Hey! After my last email, ref: M551 Shanks, I found this cartoon from the 3d Cav regimental newspaper in 1974. What it depicts—the poor old Cav trooper has been in the field for months (very common at that time). Just as he crossed Fred Wilson Blvd (at the motor pool), his Shank broke down. Note the case of Coors—we troopers ALWAYS traveled well! God, we HATED the Sheridan!

—Hank Johnson
CPT3CAV

Check it out!



Retired Red Leg Really Relates

Thanks for another great issue of MMiR. As a retired red leg, I really enjoyed the four (!) articles on artillery weapons. These articles will definitely help me build better modern artillery models. I wanted to chime in to correct a few errors, to answer a few questions and provide a few random thoughts.

PzH2000 article: I cringe every time someone calls a howitzer a tank! Oh, well, The muzzle velocity sensor (MVS) is critical, as muzzle velocity is a key determinant in range. Each time the howitzer is fired, the MVS measures the velocity of the projectile. The fire control computer onboard the howitzer compares the actual muzzle velocity to the theoretical muzzle velocity and uses that to adjust subsequent firing data accordingly. I don't know about the PzH2000, but each Paladin is equipped with an M93 MVS. Non-Paladin batteries are issued two M94 MVS, per battery.

About the Paladin: The Army has bought 957 Paladins and may get some more. As you may know, the Crusader howitzer program was terminated, and the Army may buy more Paladins to replace older M109A5s still in the Army National Guard.

The 2nd ID is in Korea, except one of its brigades is located at Ft Lewis, Washington. That brigade's

direct support battalion is 1-37 FA, and the NATO tri-color camouflage is appropriate. Unfortunately for us, this battalion turned in its Paladins in 2000 for M198 towed howitzers as part of the Army's transformation. The brigade at Fort Lewis became the first Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT).

The 3rd antenna is actually a Precision Lightweight GPS Receiver (PLGR) antenna, not an ELPRS antenna. I was in the first Paladin battalion (mid-90s) and we never had this antenna. PLGRs were new to the unit and we just mounted the puck on the roof. You can find the PLGR antenna reference in one of the Paladin manuals, TM 9-2360-314-24P-2, figure 246.

Part 90C, according to TM 9-2350-314-10, pages E-7 and I-14, are the rammer staffs. Aiming posts, rarely used in Paladin units, are stored in a bag on the cab roof. Of course, rammer staffs are used only for hand ramming.

About online sources: A great source of information about current US Army Technical Manuals is the Electronic Technical Manuals Online website at <http://www.logsa.army.mil/etms/online.htm>

You can download any manual that has a distribution code of "A" (which you can tell from the complete web URL). <http://www.logsa.army.mil/etms/data/A/071827.pdf>

Make sure you have a fast connection since the manuals can be large. Fortunately, the network at the Pentagon, where I work, is very fast.

—Bill Reagle
william.reagle@comcast.net

All we can say is: Thanks!



So it's Suffield, you say

Just going through #30 and noticed a nice little trivia bit in Nick Vanston's Abbott build-up (lookin' good, BTW). "BATUS" really (trust me on this, OK?) stands for "British Army Training Unit-Suffield," as in Canadian Forces Base-Suffield, located in kinda east central Alberta. Been there a long time and for better than 20 years the camo scheme is just like Nick shows; sand over green—pretty sexy on the Chieftains and Land Rovers.

And to complete the fun, a little ways east of there (Canadian scale...) the Bundeswehr has (had?) a training site at Canadian Forces Base-Shilo. This one's in south central Manitoba (less than two hours from the U.S. border and little over an hour west of Winnipeg). Shilo is the home for Canadian artillery and the German units use it for large unit training. Used to be about a battalion's worth of armor there; Leopards, Marders, M-113G's, Unimogs, Iltis', Leopard ARV's, etc. Also, a nice little collection of armor and arty (StuG 3, Centurion, Easy 8, etc.) Bottom line, I didn't always have to go to Europe to see the real thing at work.

—Bill Devine
Norman, OK

Bill's letter will be the first and last word on the subject. Thanks to all those who pointed out the error.



A head-mounted cup is also available

I just took a good read through issue #29 and I have to say that it is one of the best yet. I have to tell you that after getting back into the hobby about six years ago, after a near 20 year hiatus, your magazine has helped me to significantly improve my techniques. I can only aspire to be as good as you guys.

In issue #29 your Panther article was first rate, but it was the M8 (built by Joe Porter) that really caught my attention and then subsequent annoyance. My jaw hit the floor when I read the article and looked at the pictures. I needed a bib to keep dripping saliva from ruining the pages. I decided that for the first time I was going to go into more detail on kit interiors and the M8 I have on my shelf was going to be my challenge. I then went to the page where you have the MMiR Recce listing aftermarket add-ons. Although most of the items are still available, some are out of production... to my frustration. I noticed this with other kit articles as well, but this is a minor disappointment. Other than E-Bay, any hints on where to find out of production aftermarket items? I have to constantly remind myself that my obsession with model kits needs to be kept in perspective; my wife seems to remind me as well.

Again, I love your magazine and it is amazing how you always seem to outdo yourself in every issue.

—Dale Hutchinson

Well, Dale we think you've stumbled upon the major rub in any hobby: where to get what you want. There are no simple answers, but perhaps the best course of action is to develop as many retail contacts as possible. It typically doesn't cost a thing to get on a mailing list or check web sites. Also, cultivating contacts with other modelers can very helpful. The old adage "one man's trash is another man's treasure" was probably coined by a modeler. We do a tremendous amount of product acquisition for our modeler's guides and it's rare that we have to go that far (like Japan) to find an item. "Out of production" is often just a state of mind and in our little hobby, everything old really is new again. Unfortunately, we simply have to practice the same patience on finding models that we do on building them!



It's a medical matter...

In answer to Alexander Kozlov's letter regarding his German canteen I have the following to report.

This canteen, though very similar in appearance to a standard issue military canteen, is in fact, the specially designed Labeflasche (Medical Canteen) used exclusively by German field medics. In most cases, the aluminum water bottle was slightly larger in size and would hold up to 1.5 liters of drinking water. The extra leather strap across the front was added in order to attach a removable leather shoulder strap. The code markings ESB40 stamped on the neck of the water bottle signify who the manufacturer was and the year the canteen was produced. In this case the manufacturer was Valentin Knott, Maschinenfabrik, Eggstätt, Germany. The year of production is 1940.

—Remy Spezzano

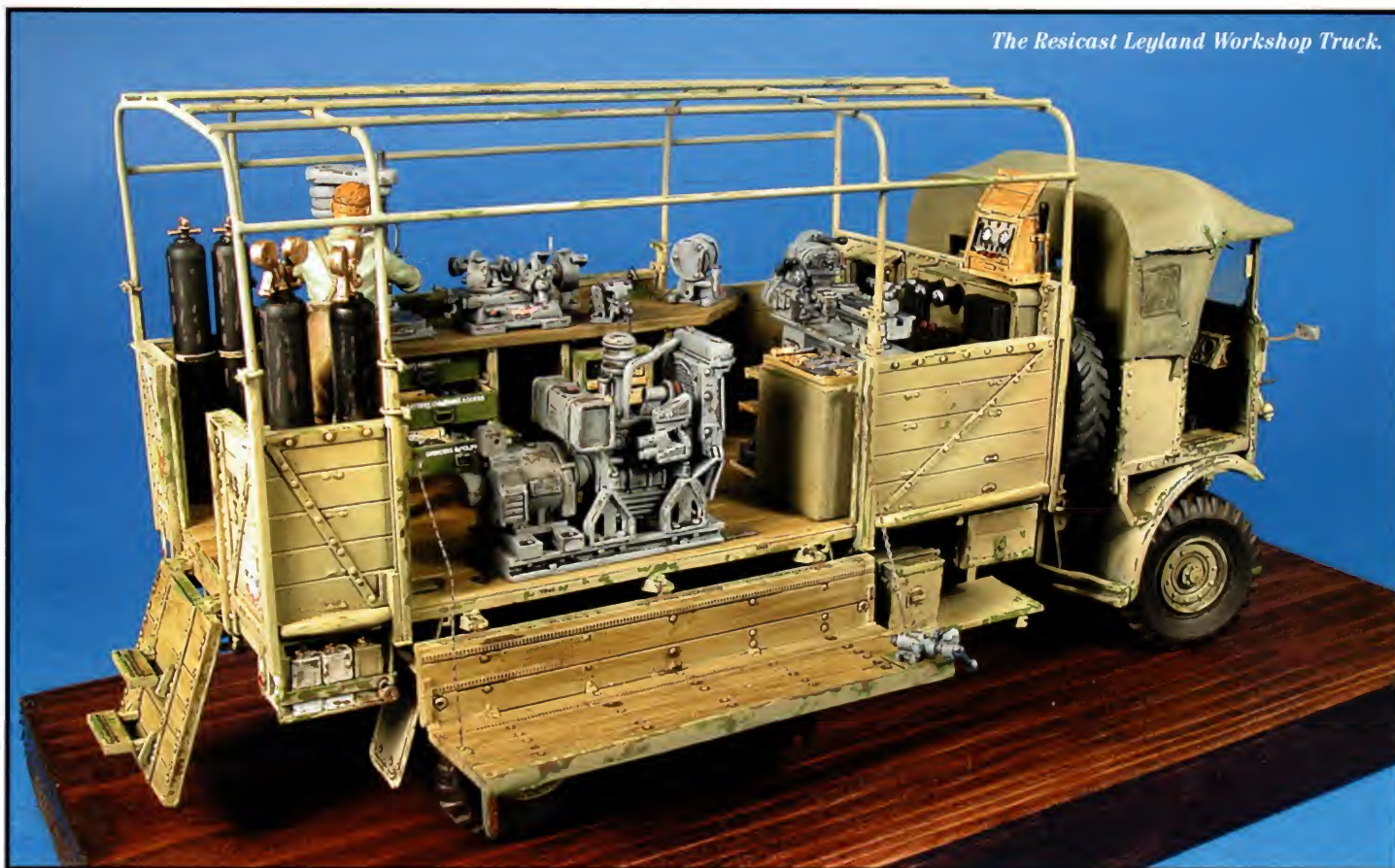


If you would like in on any of the dialog in MMiR, drop us a brief letter written on a fifty dollar bill or better yet, inscribe it on the bottom of an Accurate Armour LCT converted to a LCT (R) with 1,064 rocket launching racks mounted onto a false deck and send it to: Mail Sack, Ampersand Publishing Co., Inc. 235 NE 6th Ave., Delray Beach FL 33483 or mmirpat@aol.com. Letters are sometimes edited for brevity, obscenity, national security, or just to make you sound smarter.

We sincerely regret that we rarely, if ever, are able to personally enter into correspondence with our readers.

The Year in Preview

The Resicast Leyland Workshop Truck.



Our romp this time around includes information gathered from a number of sources in the fall of 2002, including the Euro Militaire Show and the Tokyo Hobby Show.

Aber

The current crop of etched jewelry includes the following. 35076, German Steyr Type 1500 A/01 (Tamiya), \$19.99 (1); 35090, Kommandeurwagen German Steyr Type 1500 A (Tamiya), \$19.99 (2); 35115, German 3-ton Half-Track Sd.Kfz.11 Vol. 1 (AFV Club), \$22.99 (3); 35116, German 3-ton Half-Track Sd.Kfz.11, Vol. 2 Additional set (AFV Club), \$9.99 (4); 35A89, Magazines and ammo boxes for 20mm Flak 20 & 38, \$12.99 (5); 35A90, Additional set with parts for engine & suspension for German Steyr Type 1500 A/01 (Tamiya), \$16.99; 35A93, German clamps and clasps (2 choices), \$9.99 (6); 35A95, Tie down cleats (2 choices), \$9.99 (7); G09, PzKpfw II, Ausf. L "Luks" (Sd.Kfz. 123) Grills, \$8.99 (8) and D-06, Diorama Accessories, Oak Leaves, \$12.99 (9).

Some explanation, please! The initial Steyr set is Aber's typical take down of a plastic kit, but the additional set raises brass insanity to a new level. More than enough to turn that Tamiya kit into a masterpiece. The 20mm ammo boxes are flat parts that neatly fold into perfect scale boxes. Those clasps are newer and smaller (!) versions of Aber's existing German clasps. In spite of their smaller size, they are still relatively easy to build and we're sure they'll find a place on many a kit.

Aber has also re-worked and re-tooled all of their Panzer I A sets to work with the Tristar kit.

Accurate Armour

Here's the latest list from Euro and beyond. Prices are listed in British pounds, so figure at least \$1.50 per pound as a rough estimate. Also check the Accurate Armour website for "accurate export pricing." Here we go. KV30V, M114 Recce APC (Vietnam), \$59.98; K30E, M114A1E1 Recce APC (NATO), \$59.98; KT122, Albion FT15N 6x6 Gun Tractor, \$94.99 (10); LR001 Wolf Tum G.S. Hard-Top, \$49.95; LR002, Wolf Tum G.S. Soft-

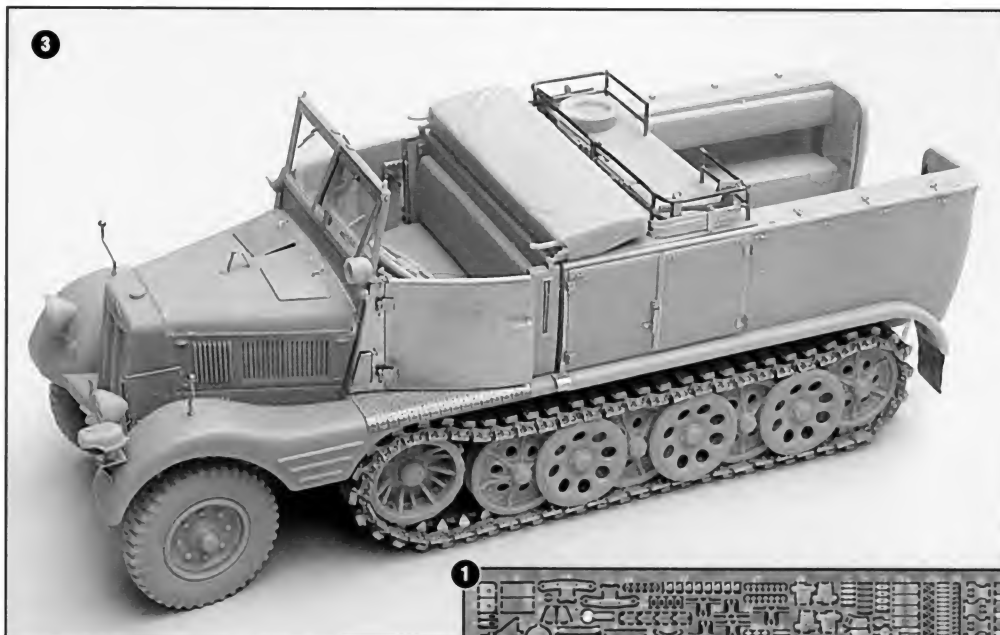
Top, \$49.95; LR004, Wolf Tum GS H/T (Water/Winter), \$54.99; T58, MTLB Replacement Track/Sprocket Set, \$11.50 and MTLB Replacement Wheel Set, \$10.00.

Future projects include KT113, Carrier, AEC 6pdr "Deacon," KT128, Diamond-T 968 6x6 4-ton Wrecker; Diamond-T 969 6x6 4-ton G.S. Cargo Truck; KT133, 17/19-RB Crawler Excavator and KT134, 17/19-RB Crawler Crane.

Quite a bit of activity here! Some of the above have been listed in this column, but prior to the addition of stock numbers and pricing. For those of you who don't recognize it (like us), the 17/19-RB Crawler is the standard heavy crane used by both the British and the U.S. This was a common site in Northwest Europe, especially around the Normandy Beachhead and construction sites inland. Just the thing for your 1/35th scale Mulberry diorama!

That last statement may not be the joke it once was. Accurate Armour has recently begun displaying a 1/35th scale LCT! It is a type used by both the British and the U.S. and the completed waterline

3



model measures around five feet. Plenty of room for 8 or 9 Shermans!

We'll keep you posted on this as we find out more. For up to the minute information, check the AA web site at accurate-armour.com

Academy

In case you hadn't heard, Academy has released the follow-up to the Honey, the **M3A1 Stuart**. This will end up being stock number 1398 and it will retail for \$25.00. It comes with the same interior as the previous models, link-to-link tracks, band tracks, auxiliary fuel cans and a spectacular set of waterslide decals. Available now.

AFV Club

Much like rust, AFV Club apparently doesn't sleep. Following quickly on the heels of the Bulldog kit is AG 35008, **M41 Walker Bulldog Light Tank Photo Etched Extra Detail (12, 13)**. This elaborate two-part set also includes etched and stamped fenders. It's very cool and the set retails for \$33.98.

AF 35045, M41 Light Tank Wheels & Suspension, is now available for \$17.98. This provides the completed suspension, minus the tracks. Just the thing for enhancing your next Chaffee model.

AF 35047, is another incarnation of the **Sd.Kfz. 11 half track**. This time around it's the wooden cab cargo version of the vehicle, used late in the war. Retail on the kit is \$39.98.

AFV has announced (and shown plastic) an

M3A3 Stuart. What we have seen of it looks pretty good and we look forward to their interpretation of the vehicle. The stock number will be 35053 and the exact retail is still TBA. Also making a recent public appearance was **35050, German 10.5cm LH18 Field Gun**. This is the natural companion for the SdKfz. 11

and we're all tingly with anticipation.

Release dates on both kits are still TBA.

Airdale Castings

Two new items from these cats, this time around. And here they are! **HA-GO Detail Set for Fine Molds Type 95 Kits** and **1/72nd Somua S35 Replacement Turret, French Version**.

No U.S. retail was available at press time, but for more information contact Mission Models at missionmodels.com

Alpha Image Inc.

More 1/35th scale miniatures have arrived from the talented hands of military artist Vincent Wai. Just in under the wire for this issue are **W35006, German SS in greatcoat with MG34**; **W35007, German SS Obergruppenführer**; **W35008, German General in windjacket** and **W35009, German Feldgendarmarie (14-17)**. All are cleanly cast in tan resin and each retails for a scant \$9.00.

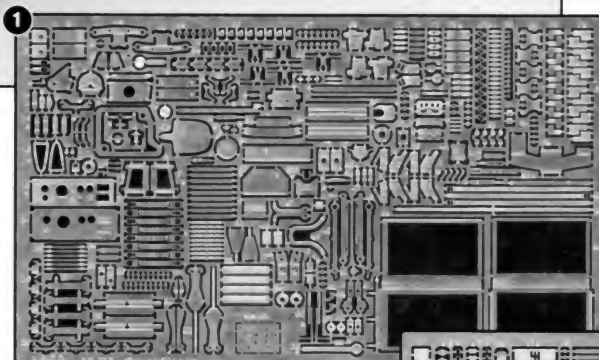
For more information on the entire line of figures, contact Alpha Image, Inc. at 339 Bristol Road East, Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 3V6 Canada. Or drop them a line at vincewai@sprint.ca

Look for these guys in the next edition of Mini-Men.

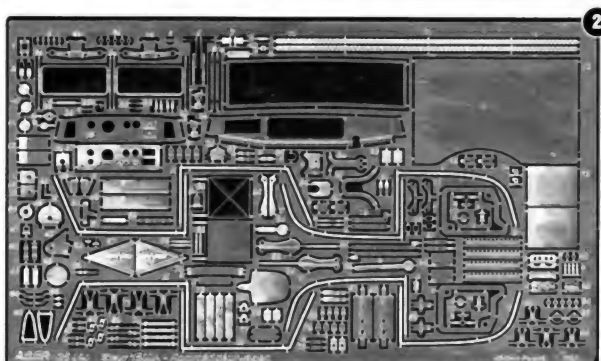
Archer

You realize of course, that Archer cannot be stopped. We truly believe that

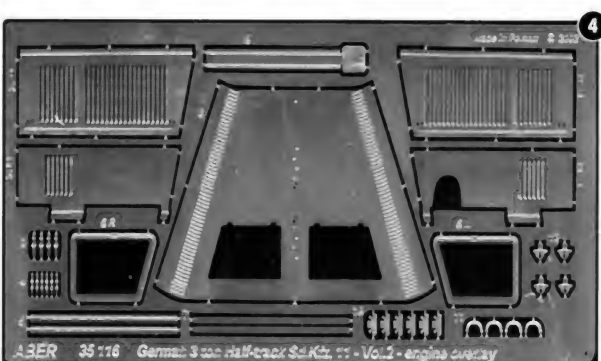
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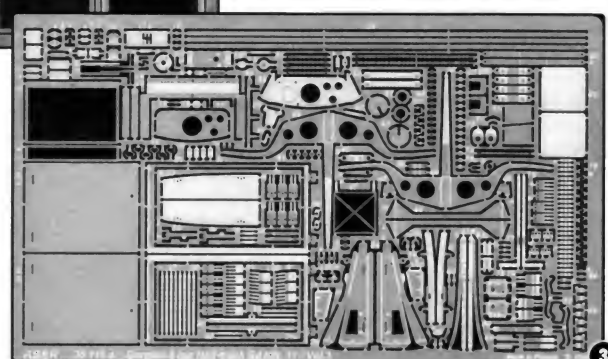
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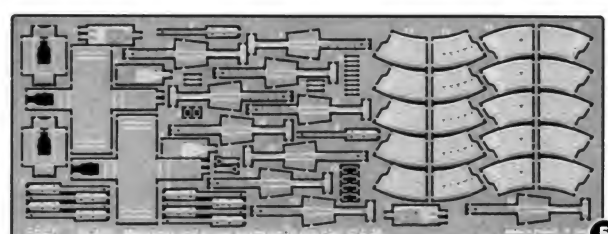
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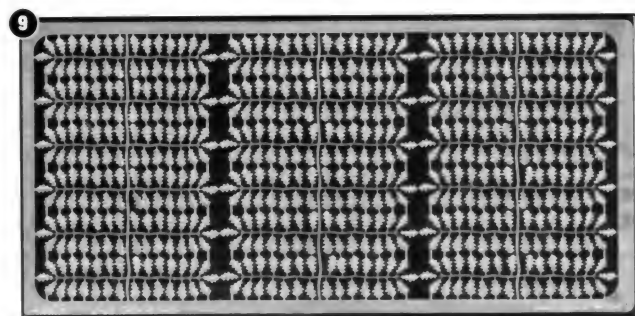
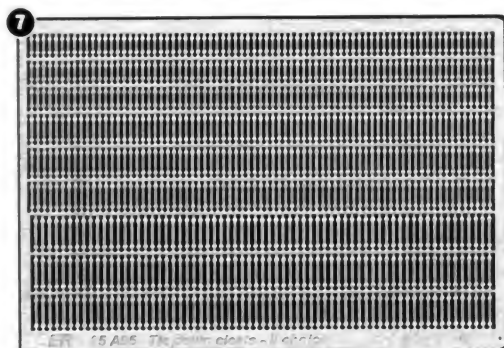
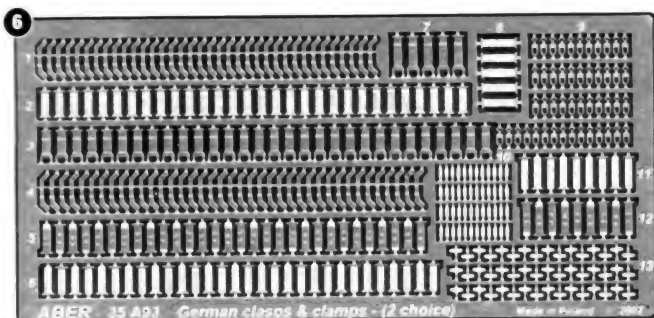
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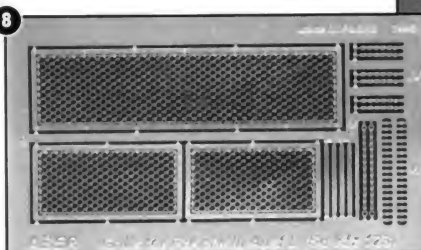


Ferdinands (19), builds four vehicles, \$9.95; **3. Kompanie s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653 Ferdinands (20)**, builds four vehicles, \$9.95 and AR35178, U.S. 50-star flags (21), which include a shoulder patch size for \$11.95.

Now you have absolutely no excuse avoid that DML Ferdinand.

Azimut

It's been a good long while since we've have



been able to reliably report on new Azimut products. We have identified a few good sources now and we're happy to bring you the following list of new stuff. 35180, Panzerbefehls-wagen IA (conversion Tristar); 35181, VAB 4X4 Milan (Conversion Heller); 35182, Flak-panzer IA (Conversion for Tristar); DUKW Update Set (Italeri) and 35338, DUKW Replacement Wheel set.

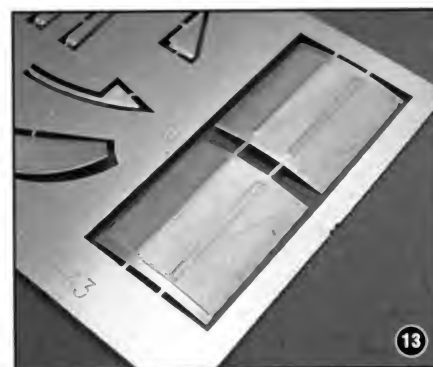
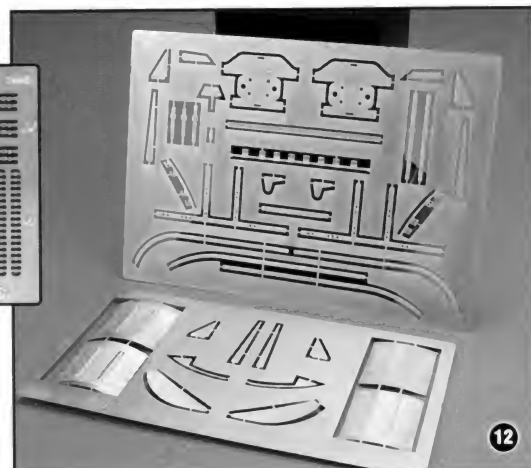
All the above items are very cleanly cast in gray resin and many

of them contain small sheets of photo-etch. The DUKW sets are particularly exciting as they specifically address many of the discrepancies of the new kit. There will also be a DUKW soft-top added to the line.

Look for Azimut through Mission Models, Great Models or Baseline Hobbies

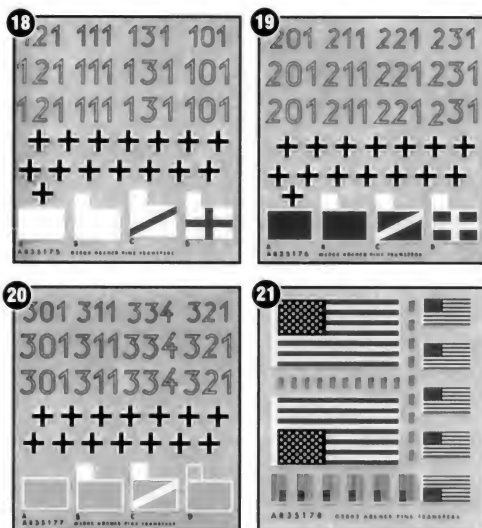
C.G.M Productions

These cats are new to the scene in the U.S. We had originally noticed them in the pages of the French modeling magazine, Steelmasters. This small French firm specializes in equipment used by



they will not rest until world domination is achieved. Resistance is, in fact, futile. Stare deep into the page and assimilate the following data. AR35175, 1. Kompanie s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653 Ferdinands (18), builds four vehicles, \$9.95; AR35176, 2. Kompanie s.Pz.Jg.Abt. 653





the U.S. Marine Corps in WW2. Their list, so far, looks like this. 002A, Wood body Ben Hur Trailer, \$29.00; 007A, International Harvester M2.4 Truck, \$89.00; 008A, Dodge 1/2-ton WC 15 (Command Car), \$79.00 (22); 009A, International Harvester M1.4 Truck, \$89.00; 001B GMC Conversion 352 short wheel base, wooden body, \$49.00; 002B, M3 Anti-tank gun 37mm, \$29.00; 001C, USMC Driver, box, helmets, \$18.00 and 002C USMC Soldier, box, tools, \$18.00.

We have received a sample of 008A, Dodge 1/2-ton WC 15 and it is a very nicely executed all-resin kit. This is the predecessor to the more familiar 3/4-ton series of Dodges and anyone interested in a unique piece for their collection should look no further. These vehicles were quite common in the Army during the pre-war training period, throughout the Philippines, North Africa, Italy and with the Marines in the Pacific right through the end of the war. The 1/2-ton series was not declared "limited standard" until 1945.

No word on a U.S. importer yet, but those inter-

ested in more information should contact C.G.M. Production, Route de Bédarieux, 34650 Lunas, France. Telephone/Fax 04 67 23 78 13.

Cromwell

One of many very nice items spied at Euro 2002 was the Cromwell's new German Flak 41 (23). This is presented in firing mode and the kit features a turned aluminum barrel. The Flak 41 is listed as kit CK100 and the UK retail is £60.00. We have seen the kit sold in the states through Mission Models at \$120.00.

For more inside dope, contact Cromwell Models at 6/6 The Quadrangle, 57 Ruchill Street, Glasgow G20 9PX, Scotland, United Kingdom. Telephone +44 (0) 141 948 0255, fax +44 (0) 141 948 0236. E-mail cromwell.models@virgin.net or visit their website at www.cromwellmodels.com

Custom Dioramics

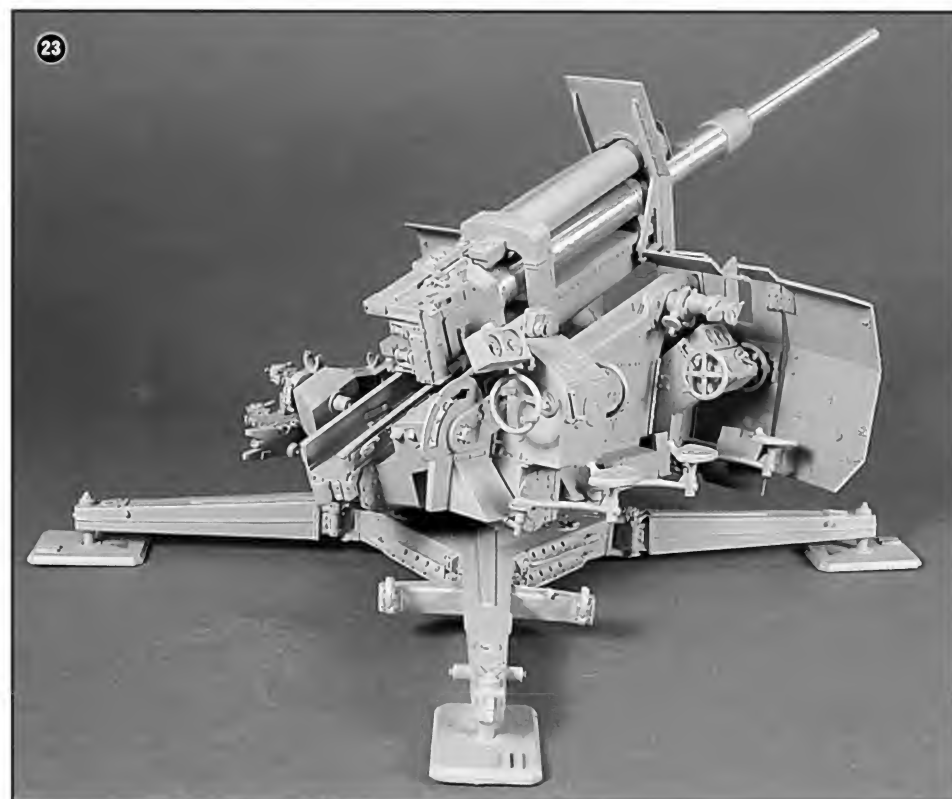
These guys are lighting up a whole series of Pacific war goodies; many of them for use on their impressive poly foam Pacific Beachhead WWII Diorama Base (7013). 6055, is Pacific Beach Debris WWII. This is 58 resin pieces, such as palm logs and washed up gear, such as boots, packs, cans and other flotsam for \$27.95. Combine all this with the new U.S. Marines sets from Warriors and you've got yourself a project.

Also up are several new figures. CD 4038, European School Teacher WWII (it's a chick), \$12.95; CD 4239, European Businessman WWII, \$12.95; CD 4044, German Sportsman WWII, \$12.95; CD 4041, European Salesman WWII, \$12.95; CD 4042, German Polizei #2 WWII, \$12.95 and CD 4043, European Red Cross Nurse WWII, \$12.95.

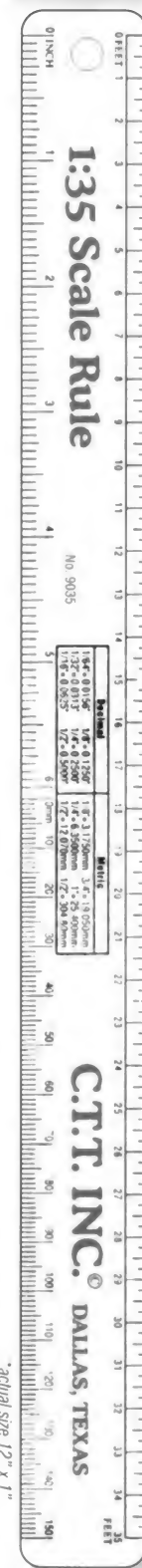
There is always a dearth of "behind the scenes" types and the continuation of this series is greatly anticipated.

Des Kits

As expected, Des has released another version of its 4/5-ton tractor. This time it's 35087, Tractor Federal 4x4, 4/5 Ton, Model 94X43C (24). This



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Propelled Gun, \$22.00 (26); 6398, German Rest Camp (Reissue of ESCI), \$8.00; 7401 and 1/9th Scale U.S. WWII Motorcycle (Reissue of ESCI), \$49.00 (27). If you've been searching for that big Harley, now's your chance!

In the 1/72nd Little Dudes category are, **6045, German Paratroopers Grune Teufel, \$8.00 and 6046, American Infantry 2nd Division, \$8.00.**

Legend Productions

This prolific Korean company is now represented in the U.S. by VLS. Although it is just the tip of the iceberg, we have

had a peek at **1043, IDF M151A1 Detailing/Accessory set (\$13.95).** The level of quality is quite high, as it is in the entire line. The line is monstrous in size, including nearly 50 figures and an equal number of kits and conversion sets. Highlights (for us) are the **Cromwell ARV Conversion (1002, \$49.95), the M48A3 Engine Set (1032, \$39.95), the IDF Puma APC Kit (1042, \$132.95) and the IDF**

Achzarit. This last item is available as either a full kit (1044, \$132.95) or a conversion (1045, \$117.95). Of course, there's tons more and to check it out see the VLS website at www.modelmecca.com

Lincoln County Line

VLS' value priced line of figures and accessories now offers the following. **0016, Military Shower Stall, \$9.95 and 0017, Military Toilet, \$9.95.** Both sets were formerly available from Custom Dioramics and they would be useful in any Twentieth Century scene.

Masters Productions

This brand new company from France has a whole bunch of stuff coming on line. Here's what we know so far. **35001, Hummer Wheels, 11.50 Euro; 35002, M8/M20 wheels, 13.00 Euro; 35003, Conversion GMC CCKW 352 (Tamiya/Italeri), 54.00 Euro (28); 35004, Conversion GMC 40mm Bofors (Tamiya/Italeri), 54.00 Euro (29); 35006 GMC Leroi Compressor Conversion, 54.00 Euro and 35007, GMC Windshield with cover, 4.50 Euro.** Figure the Euro to be roughly equal to the dollar.

Future items include **35005, Stencil Set for French 2DB (Bofors); F35001 Bofors Crew (4 figs.) and F35002 GMC Driver.**

We have the 352 and the Bofors conversion in our offices and the quality is quite impressive. The fact that the kits are engineered to fit either of the available plastic kits is a major bonus. Different parts are included and it's not just a "universal" conversion.

There are several more items to be released in the coming months and if initial impressions are any indication, this could be one of the most exciting lines to come down the pike.

The only U.S. source we currently have is Mission Models.

Model Victoria

This prolific Italian company is now offering the following items. **MV-4044, Rural Stone House, \$74.95; MV-4045, Half Round Tile Roof, \$18.95; MV-4046, Corrugated Iron Section, \$6.95; MV-4047, North African Well, \$17.95; MV-4048, North African Man with Donkey, \$23.95; MV-4049, Italian Damaged Fuel Drums, \$12.95; MV-4050, Stone Animal Shelter, \$29.95; MV-4051, Italian Antitank Barriades, \$12.95; MV-4052, Transmission for Italian "M" Tanks, \$12.95; MV-4053, Man With Shovel, \$11.95 and MV-4054, Woman with Children (3 figures), \$23.95.**

The quality is as we have come to expect from MV and the resin buildings are particularly stunning. They are beautifully rendered and the "Stone Animal Shelter" is basically ready to paint after adding the small roof section. The stone house is suitable for any one of a number of southern European settings. It strikes us that these scenes would not be limited to twentieth century. The architecture would look fine in even a Napoleonic scene.

Chesapeake Model Designs (CMD) is also the rep in the U.S. So see their ad on page 51.

is very similar to the earlier Autocar release, but with rounded front bodywork. The quality is what we have come to expect from Des and we'll be taking a closer look in a future issue.

No specific U.S. retail was available at press time, but the line is stocked through Mission Models and The Red Lancers.

Dragon

Although the pace of DML releases has slowed in recent years, everything they release seems to have a significant impact. 6152 is **3.7cm Pak 35/36 w/crew.** This has been announced for some time, but we have recently had a chance to see it up close. It's a very nice kit and it contains options to build three different versions. A three-man crew is included, along with a sprue of small arms.

Also, another version of Dragon's excellent Panther kit is about to hit the streets. This is **6168, Panther Ausf. A, Late Version.** Another great Volstad illustration adorns the box top—at no extra charge!

Drop your linen and stop your grinnin', DML has announced and shown a brand new Nashorn. This is an all-new kit, presumably brought to you by the same team that executed the Ferdinands and the Panthers. Based on just a few photos, we can say that this baby looks good! There is an incredible amount of detail in the crew compartment and the kit will include link-to-link tracks and turned brass rounds. This is being billed as Dragon's 10th Anniversary kit and the official label is **Sd.Kfz. 164 Hornisse (Nashorn, Early variant) (25).** The kit number is 6165.

No retail is available for either item, but for more information check out www.marcoimport.com

Italeri

Here's the list of current plastic releases, always welcome, of course. **6248, M107 Self-**





26

In the "MIG Series" is MP 35001, Pz IV F2 Conversion Resin Set for Tamiya Pz IV H (30); MP 35002, 5 Road Wheels for Steyr 1500 Resin Set for Tamiya kit; MP 35003, 9 Wheels for "234" series Resin Set for Italeri kits (17 parts); MP 35004, Exhaust Pipe for Pz IV F1, F2, G, H & J early resin Set for Tamiya/DML; MP 35005, 2 Road Wheels for Sd.Kfz. 11 Resin Set for AFV Club kit; MP 35006, Sd.Kfz. 11

Two-Piece Tarp & Wheels Resin Set for AFV Club kit (31) and MP 007, Pz. III & StuG. III Stalingrad Base for all kinds of Pz. III and StuG. III kits.

In the "Rarities World Series" is RW 35013, Pantherturm I with Stahluntersatz, complete resin kit (32); RW 35014, Pantherturm III Berlin with damage effects, complete resin kit and RW 35018, Destroyed T-34 Hull, complete resin kit.

And, under the heading of "Professional Pigments Colors" (33) is P0 22, Ashes White; P0 23, Black Smoke, P0-24, Light Rust; P0 25, Standard Rust; P0 26, Copper Rust; P0 27, Light Dust; P0 28, Europe Dust; P0 29, Brick Dust; P0 30, Beach Sand and P0 31, Vietnam Earth.

This last list is composed of small bottles of colored pigment in powder form. This is similar to what the model railroad crowd has had, but in much more relevant colors. They are very useful and we've taken to calling them "migmments." For instance, the white color is very handy to make white wash, just by mixing it with Tamiya thinner.

No U.S. prices or agents are listed as of yet, but for more information please contact MIG Productions Factory S.L., C/Santiago Rusiñol 7, Pral 2a, 08750 Molins de Rei, Barcelona, Spain. Phone/Fax (34) 936 689 959, or check at www.migproductions.com

New Connection

New from "New" is NC35230, Sdkfz. 251 10.5 LFH, Conversion AFV Club (34); NC35231, Sdkfz. 251 7.5 cm KwK 42 L/70 Conversion AFV Club and NC5228, Brummbar Early Conversion for Italeri (35).

All the items look pretty neat and the Brummbar has a bunch of extra stuff inside.

Future projects include Salvenmaschinenkanone Type 4 Full Kit and Pz. IA Flakpanzer

Réf : 35003 **MASTERS Productions**

Echelle / Scale : 1/35 Made in France

CONVERSION GMC CCKW 352 châssis court

Pour kit TAMIYA & ITALERI For TAMIYA & ITALERI kit

Kit en résine / Resin kit

(Bâche non incluse)

28

Réf : 35004 **MASTERS Productions**

Echelle / Scale : 1/35 Made in France

CONVERSION GMC 40 mm BOFORS

Pour kit TAMIYA & ITALERI For TAMIYA & ITALERI kit

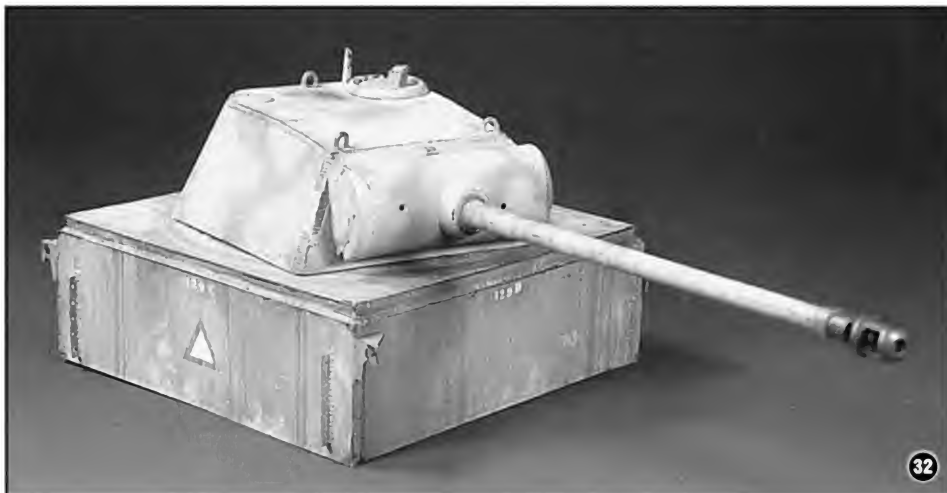
Kit en résine / Resin kit

29

MIG Productions

Some of you may recognize the name Miguel Jimenez. He has become a fixture in European and Japanese modeling journals and has also made a good name for himself in European competitions with his awesome diorama work. Well, like any red-blooded capitalist, he has decided to put that name to work! The line is MIG Productions after his nickname "Mig."

It's a very diverse and well-presented line of goods. Not at all what we have come to expect from most new ventures. All of the packaging and other materials are professionally produced and executed, and this follows through to the instructions, too. Here's the line, as we know it so far.



32

ARCHER DRY TRANSFERS

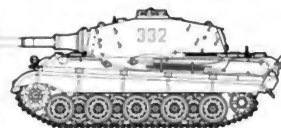
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Tiger Mix #1



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Michael Wittman's last ride
Kursk Tiger I
Illustrated instructions

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AR35157

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Tiger II Early turret
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Tiger Mix #3



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Builds two vehicles
Tiger I Rebuilt hybrid
Kursk Tiger P
Porsche Tiger I prototype
Illustrated instructions

Tiger Mix #4



AR35167 \$29.95

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One each of AR35155, AR35156, AR35157, and AR35158.
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AR35010

\$16.95
Builds five complete tanks from this unit with extras.
Comes with complete illustrated instructions.

Panzer III, ausf J 2. Ko.

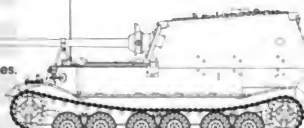


s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653 Ferdinands

1.Kompanie

AR35175 \$9.95

Builds four vehicles.
Comes with illustrated placement instructions.



2.Kompanie

AR35176 \$9.95

Builds four vehicles.
Comes with illustrated placement instructions.



3.Kompanie

AR35177 \$9.95

Builds four vehicles.
Comes with illustrated placement instructions.

Markings based on photographs and James Blackwell's theory on the color coding of the Farber panels as posted on Missing Links Axis discussion group.

Modelers voted us "BEST NEW MODELING PRODUCT" AMPS CONVENTION 2000, 2001, and 2002

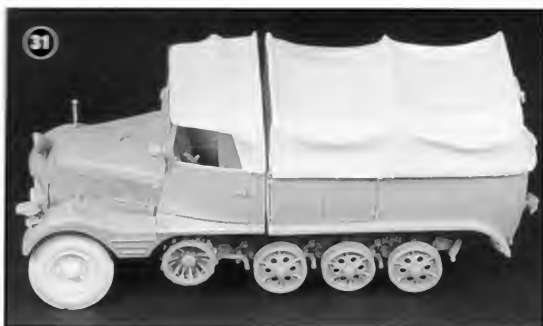
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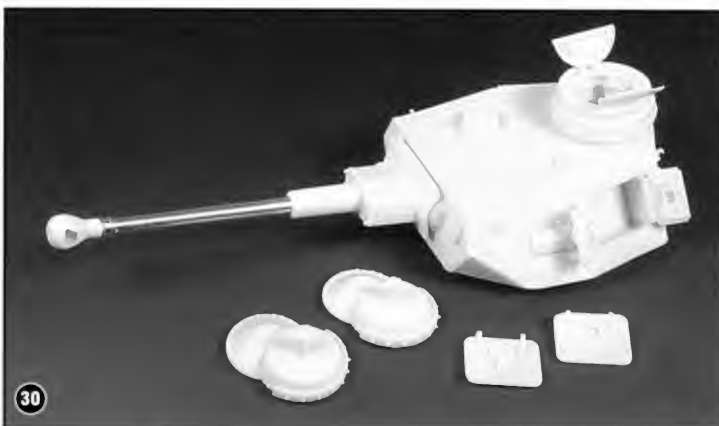
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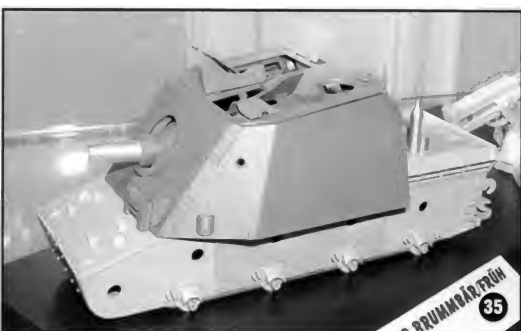
Our U.S. prices were supplied by Mission Models.

Royal Models

If you can stay sitting down for this, you have great self-control. Ready, set, go! RM-278, Small Handles; RM-280, German Propaganda Posters Part 2; RM-282, US Propaganda Posters Part 2; RM-287, SS Grenadier At Rest; RM-288, Cobblestones; RM-289, Red Tiles; RM-290, SdKfz 11 3-ton Halftrack Detail Set; RM-298, Marder III Ausf H Exterior Detail Set; RM-299, Marder III Ausf H Driver's Compartment; RM-300, Marder III Ausf H Gun Shield Detail Set and RM-301, Marder III auf Gw. 38(t) Drivers Compartment/Ammo Stowage (38).



vehicles. Their themes generally run back and forth between IJN and JGSDF stuff, with a really oddball piece thrown in now and again. Their first all styrene kit is just about ready and it is G01, JGSDF Type 89 Infantry Fighting Vehicle. The Type 89 is to the Type 90 tank as the Bradley is to the Abrams. The model was developed in coordination with the



Chesapeake Model Designs (CMD) is the representative in the U.S. See their ad on page 51 for more information.

Tamiya

Well, in spite of all types of internet rumors, the Big T is not slowing down. The big news this quarter is the late 2002 release of the T-55A (39). This is an all-new kit and, at first, it seems like an odd choice. Then, you remember that the T-55 was produced in higher numbers than almost any other tank in history. It has served in dozens of armies and in many, many configurations. We'll take it!

Look for stock number 35257.

A follow-up ammo set is coming for the Marder IIIM. This will be real turned brass and contain both charged rounds and empty casings. Stock number 35258.

Also hitting the streets soon is a new figure set. This will be the 355256, German Winter Infantry and it depicts several heavily clothed dudes creeping along behind a tank, a fence or whatever.

The latest big scale kit to get the Tiger I treatment is 56018, German Heavy Tank Type VI King Tiger "Production Turret." (40-42) This

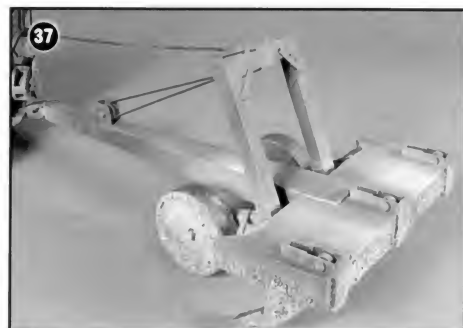
Chinese plastic model company, Trumpeter. We believe that when it becomes available, it will be sold under the Trumpeter label in the U.S. and Europe.

Prices and release dates are TBA.

Resicast

Incredible casting quality, thorough research, and fascinating and unusual subjects. What more could you want from a resin company? Here is what we recently spied in the Resicast coffer. 35163 is Rooter H3 (37). This is a big steel-wheeled scraper thingee (for breaking up hard ground or old road surfaces) to pull behind the Resicast bulldozer and it retails for \$60.00. 35237 creates Steering for GMC. This is a simple, articulated resin mechanism to fit Tamiya GMC models. It retails for \$12.00.

Under the "spectacular" heading is 35162, Leyland Breakdown Truck. This is a highly elaborate model complete with all manner of repair equipment and tools (see lead image). It's one of the more complex resin kits we've ever seen. All this joy can be yours for \$199.00. If you haven't got the stomach for the truck, the entire suite of repair equipment is available as 35336, UK Machinery and Tools for \$60.00.



Conversion Tristar.

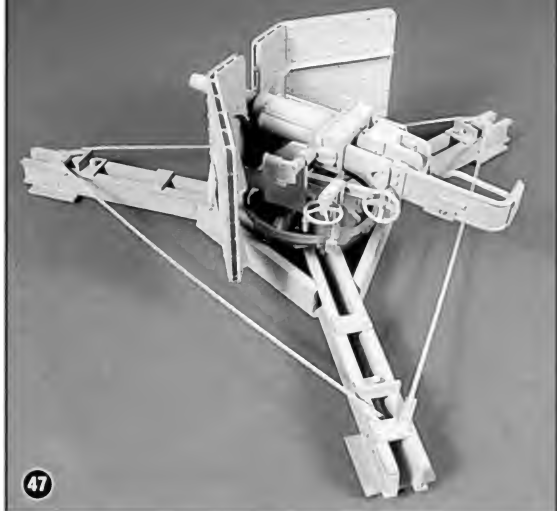
For more information contact www.new-connection.de

Panda Models

This is a new venture out of China and their first release is 35006, UH-1D "Wasp." (36) This is your basic UH-1D in 1/35th scale. The "Wasp" label was picked up from the squadron insignia used on the subject helicopter, so it's not some new variant. The U.S. importer is Marco Polo Import and more information can be found at www.marcopoloimport.com

Pit Road

Here's an interesting one. Pit Road is a small Japanese manufacturer of white metal and resin



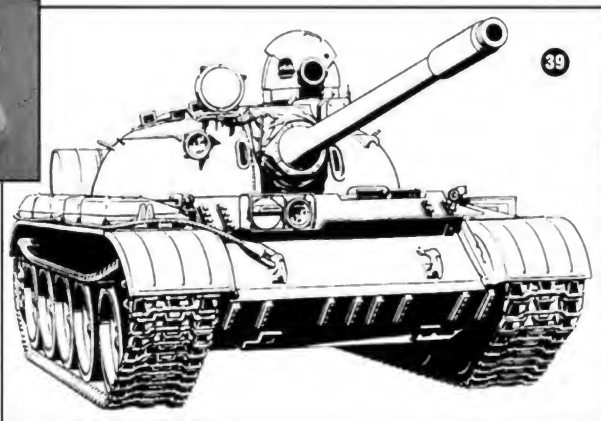
is Tamiya's older King Tiger kit brought up to modern standards with the addition of all the sound and motion gear found in the Tiger I kit. It is elaborately packaged, much like the earlier kit. The artwork seen on the 1/35th "Ardennes" Tiger adorns the huge box (minus the figures and motorcycle) and the kit includes some completely new stuff like a full set of Zimmerit panels for the hull. Cool!

U.S. retail prices for all of the above items are still TBA.

What's up next year? Well there are plenty of rumors, as usual. However "our people" tell us that we are looking at about the same amount of activity as this year, so stay tuned!

TechStar

Techstar, another of the prolific VLS in-house lines is now offering the following. **TC 2004, German AFV Crosses** is a comprehensive stencil set for \$11.95. **TC 2005, U.S. Stars WWII**, is also a brass stencil with several different sized stars for \$11.95. **TC 2006, German AFV Numbers**, is more of the same, but it also allows for the creation of outlines for \$11.95. TC 2006 is listed as **Aircraft**



Radius Scribing Set, but it would definitely find a use on your workbench. This stainless steel set is priced at \$11.95. Also highly useful is **TC 2010, Micro Saws Set #2**. This .005 thickness stainless steel set also retails for \$11.95.

Under the resin category is a highly useful **SS Rune Figure Base**. This piece can be used to display either 1/35th-scale figures or 1/9th-scale busts. It strikes us that if you scraped off the runes, you could display anything on it. A solid color base would be an interesting departure from the typical stained wood. It is stock number TC 6107 and it retails for \$9.95.

For more dope, see www.modelmecca.com

Tiger Model Designs

Every once in a while, the moon and stars all come together to create resin happiness. Our preferred criteria are: interesting and unusual subjects, a good selection of conversions, accessories and full kits, reasonable prices, a few solid German items and production in our own back yard.

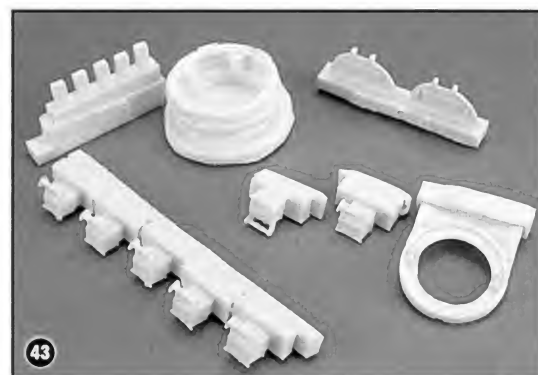
Well, you can't get any closer than Tiger Model Designs. Located at the top of the state of Florida (we're at the bottom), they have been cranking out the goodies non-stop since we first discovered them at the 2002 AMPS event.

We have been pawing over their most

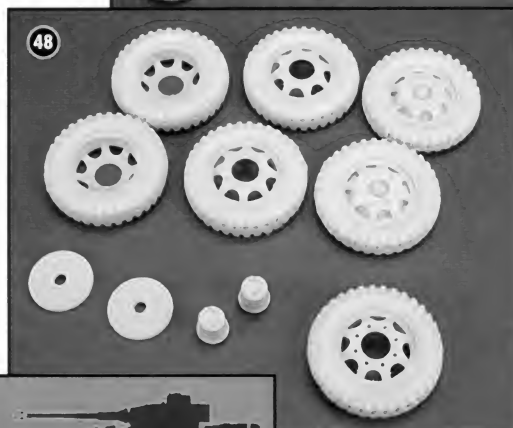
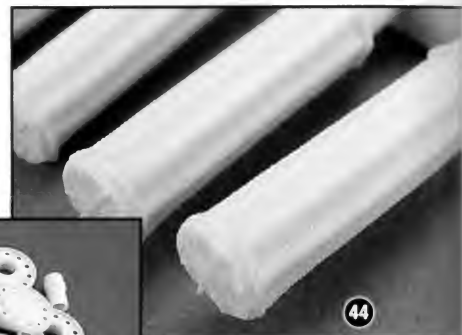
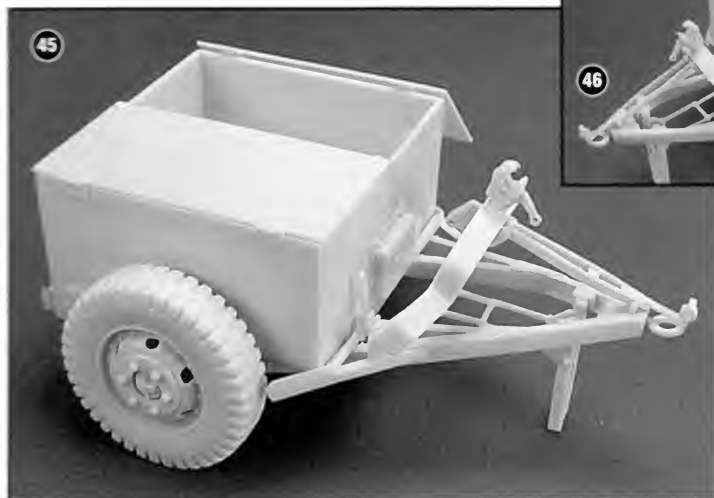
Another head smacker is **352064, Pz III N DAK Conversion**. This is a smartly conceived and simple conversion for the Tamiya L kit priced at \$19.95.

Smaller items include **352071, a full set of SiG 33 Ammo** is just \$7.95; **352072, a Fug. 5 Radio**, for \$7.95; **352073, Wicker Ammo Cases**, \$5.95 (**44**) and **359001, Head Set #1**, \$6.95.

Perhaps the most interesting item in the box this time was a full kit, **353001, U.S. M8 Ammo Trailer** (towed behind the M8 HMC) (**45, 46**). This crisply cast kit is composed of only a few parts, but the end result looks real pretty! The ammo compartment is cast hollow and it sits on the frame after removing a short over pour. The remainder of the kit is warp and flash free, shocking when one



recent releases and they look like this. **352031 is PzKpfw IV G Drive Housing**, a simple bagged item for \$3.95. **352032 depicts Pz IV D-H Rear Armor**, another simple item priced at \$4.95. **352033, is a very clever Pz IV G Backdate**. This neatly converts the Tamiya H for \$25.00. **352051 is a Grille-M Update (Re-Mastered)**. This improves the Alan kit for \$19.95. **352061, PzKpfw III N Gun and Mantlet** is one of those "how come no one else thought of this" items. It's a really simple bagged set for \$6.95. Another winner is **352062, PzKpfw III/PzKpfw IV Cupola w/interior** (**43**). This is a sharply cast and mastered cupola that is complete with all of its interior vision blocks and leather head pads for \$7.95. **352063 makes up a set of German 90mm Smoke grenade launchers**, typically seen on the turrets of Panzer IIIs, IVs, Tigers and Panthers. These are amazing little resin castings that are pre-detailed to travel right to your model. Grenades that fit perfectly into the tubes are also provided for a measly \$5.95.



sees the thinly cast doors and towing rig. Lead foil and wire is also provided to create the tie-down straps and brake lines. Minus that last bit of detail, we had ours together in just over an hour. And all this love is only \$24.95.

Future projects include a **Matilda update** for the old Tamiya kit, with new and hollow upper armor and turret, side skirts and photo-etch; a **PzKpfw IV E backdate**; an **F2 "late" Famo update**; a **PzKpfw II J backdate**; an **M10 ammo Trailer**, a **250 gal. Water trailer** and a **1-ton utility trailer**. There are many other items to be released by next spring, but that's all we can say for now!

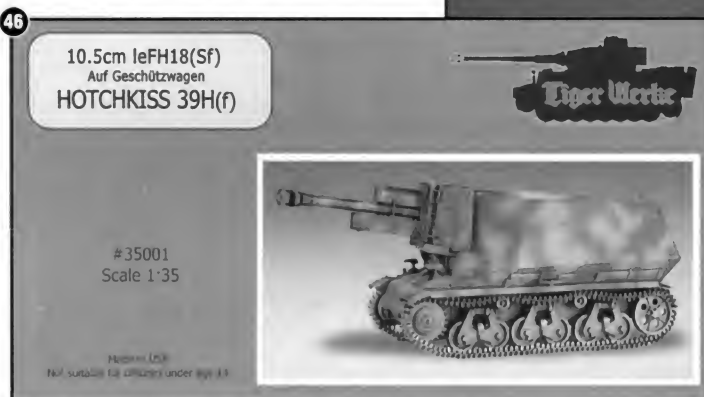
For complete contact information, see the TMD ad on page 32.

Tiger Werke/Precision Models

Tiger Werke, in the personage of Jef Verswyvel, master modeler

extraordinaire, now has their first full kit available. It is **TW35001, 10.5cm leFH18 (sF) auf Geschützwagen Hotchkiss 39H(f) (46)**. This is a plastic and resin kit that encompasses a huge chunk of the old Heller kit, plus all the exquisitely rendered parts needed to create the 10.5cm SPG. This includes highly detailed resin tracks, radios and shell racks with rounds, etc., all for \$99.00. Also new is **TW35004, Kübelwagen Radio Car (Type 821)**. This simple conversion makes something special out of your Tamiya kit for \$18.00.

Future Tiger Werke products include **7.5cm Pak40 auf Geschützwagen Hotchkiss** and the

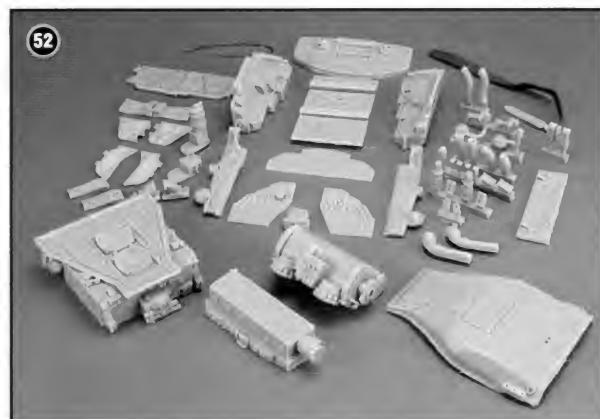


7.5cm Pak40 Gun.

Happy days! The line of Precision Models products from Belgium is now being produced in the U.S. under the watchful eyes of the master casters at Tiger Werke.

Among the new items displayed by Precision at Euro was **PM35061A, 7.5cm Festung-pak 51 L/24 (47)**. This is the weapon used in the early versions of the StuG and Panzer IV, emplaced in a steel carriage for use on the Westwall. This kit will retail in the U.S. for \$45.00. There are also **7.5cm boxes (PM35062X, \$8.00)** and **rounds (PM35063X, \$8.00)** to go with the kit.

For more information on either line of products, please contact D&V Selections USA, PO Box 623, Rowelsburg, WV 26425. Phone (304) 454-2400, Fax (304) 454-2022. E-mail:



DVSelections@aol.com

Trakz Armour Productions

Lots and lots of goodies from VLS's in-house armor line. **TX 0014 is Opel Blitz Wheels (Late)** for \$12.95 **(48)**. This set features the late style of hub. **TX 0015 makes up a LVTA1/A4 Cargo Compartment Interior** for \$19.95. **TX 0016 is a simple set of KVI/KVII Road Wheels Set #1**, a full set of 12 for \$12.95 **(49)**. Interestingly, this is the type with no perforations. **TX 0017, KVI/KVII Road Wheels set #2** a full set of 12 for \$12.95. These do contain holes around the rims. **TX0020, Sd.Kfz.184**

Elefant/Ferdinand Decals is an extensive sheet of waterslide decals containing numbers, crosses and symbols in red, blue and white for \$9.95. **TX0021, Pershing Stowage Set** contains several items to spruce up the Tamiya kit. This includes various packs and bedrolls along with the long traps seen on Zebra Mission vehicles and the front hatch covers. This last item was stowed on the right side of the turret and the kit provides it sculpted within its rack for extra realism. Just \$17.95 takes it home.

Trumpeter

Trumpeter, the prolific Chinese plastic kit company has four new 1/35th plastic treats available. And don't ya wanna know what they are? OK, here we go, **00309, Swedish Strv 103B (S-tank early version)**, \$24.98; **00310, Swedish Strv 103C (S-tank, late version)**, \$24.98; **00316, Russian Heavy Tank IS-3M**, \$19.99 and **05101 Mil Mi-4 Hound Helicopter**. They are also listing a 1/16th scale **T-34/85 Model 1944** as a TBA. Pretty heady

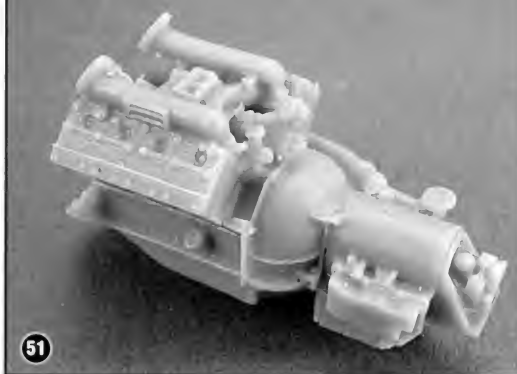
stuff, don't you think?

And, in the "How a-bout that!" category we can tell you the following 2003/2004 releases. Are you sitting down? They are 0207, German Railroad Gun K5 E Leopold; 0208, German Karl/Gerät 60cm & 54cm; 0209, German Railway Carrier for Self-Propelled Morser Karl Gun; 0311, KV1 & KV2 Soviet Tank and in 1/16 scale, 0903, T-34/76 1943 Soviet Tank.

That should give you something to think about! All the release dates and prices on the future items are TBA. More skinny when we can get it.

Verlinden Productions

We have started receiving samples from the boys (and girls) at VP and we can tell you this: it's nice to see them again. Super sharp casting, solid ideas and great value. What was true ten years ago, is still true today!



In our offices are 1832, M24 Chaffee Engine Compartment (50, 51). This is a highly elaborate set for the Italeri kit and the twin V-8s are something to see, all for \$24.95. 1833, is Jagdpanther Zimmerit for the Tamiya kit, several photo-etch panels for \$29.95. 1834, M60A1 Engine & Compartment (52), is a big-time party for the Tamiya M60 kits. A complete compartment, multi-

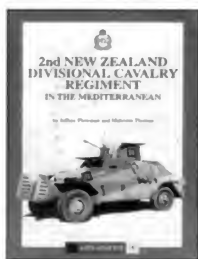
part engine, deck and grill parts, and flexible tubing is all in the box for \$29.95. Got a closet full of Tamiya Stuarts? Take 'em down with 1841, M5 Recon/Command Interior & Exterior. This is a complete interior conversion with top deck and other parts for \$24.95. 1843 is Tiger I Zimmerit & Details. This is also etched sheet for the Tamiya kit for \$29.95. Last up is 1845, M5 Stowage Set. This is dozens of clean resin stowage bits (packs, cans, weapons, etc.) for the Tamiya kit, sensibly priced at \$17.95.

One future release we have to slip in here is the LCM 3. This is the small landing craft used to tote a single Sherman. The VP kit will be a waterline version and a crew will also be available separately. Look for this in January 2003.

For up to the minute news on the entire VP line see www.verlinden-productions.com

Book Reviews

2nd New Zealand Divisional Cavalry Regiment in the Mediterranean
by Jeffrey Plowman and Malcolm Thomas
Kiwi Armour
Soft Cover
56 pages B&W with color plates
ISBN 0-9582350-0-7

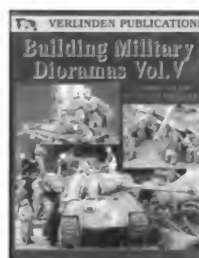


EVERY NOW AND THEN YOU ARE pleasantly surprised by a book that is much more interesting than you expected it to be. Such is the case here. We freely admit that up until now information on New Zealand armor units in WWII has been very thin (at least on this side of the Atlantic), but thanks to

the author's twenty years of research that is now changed. Contained in a scant number of pages are 84 black and white photos, three maps, three pages of line drawings of vehicles in 1/35 scale and 7 color prints. Also the complete unit history, table of organization charts, tactical markings, camouflage colors, uniforms and insignia. For modelers (like us) they include a listing of armor kits and conversions by manufacture and product number of the types of vehicles used by the 2nd New Zealand Cavalry at one time or another. Man, talk about a couple of guys doing their homework! The unit history section alone is fascinating, it was truly a modern odyssey. The types of equipment and vehicles used during their long service was quite diverse. From Marmon Herrington armored cars and M3 Stuart light tanks to Jeeps and Staghound armored cars. Tucked in here and there among all this information are personal narratives of some of the experiences of the unit's veterans. Even if Commonwealth armor isn't your thing, don't pass this one up.

Building Military Dioramas Vol. V
by VP Studios
Verlinden Publications

Soft Cover
48 pages 94 color photos
ISBN 193060755-5
\$14.95



VERLINDEN CONTINUES TO ADD to their successful line of diorama books with Volume V. This series is like an idea factory aimed at the average modeler, showing how life like and realistic a model becomes, even in a simple diorama. The "how we did it" text and captions for each example are brief.

But they cover all the major steps. Also at the end of most of the sections is a complete list of materials and products used for that diorama. (Nine different ones for this volume). The photos are expertly done; just looking at them will get your gears spinning. So go ahead, add this one to your collection.

PzKpfw VI TIGER vol. II
by Tadeusz Melleman
AJ Press
Soft Cover
108 pages, 51 B&W photos
ISBN 83-7237-112-1
\$29.99



THIS INTERESTING PUBLICATION approaches a subject that is already familiar to many of us (the famed Tiger I that is) from a different angle than most others. While it doesn't try to be the definitive Tiger I book, it is a good single source for information and reference on the Tiger tank, especially to

modelers. The book contains sixteen full pages of color drawings of different vehicles, plus an impressive twenty full pages of line drawings, all in 1/35 scale. On top of that there are eleven other pages of beautifully done 3-dimensional detailed color illustrations of component parts from tracks to main gun. Then, to top it off, six pages listing kits, photo-etch, resin parts and transfers that are on the market for modeling the Tiger I. The text and captions are fully bilingual (in this case Polish and English). There is a good written description and discussion section on the vehicle lay out and mechanical components. However, there is no over-

all or operational history of the Tiger I included. Some references are made to units or engagements in some of the illustrations and photo captions, though. Several of the black and white photos appear to have been rather heavily retouched in an attempt to bring out some details.

Should you still put this one in the shopping cart? Sure!

The GI in Combat Northwest Europe 1944-45
by Steven J. Zaloga & Ronald Volstad
Concord Publications Company
Soft cover
52 pages B&W with color plates
\$11.98



ONCE AGAIN CONCORD Publications has produced another winner to add to their long line of books. As the title implies, it covers the weapons, uniforms and equipment used by American soldiers from D-Day to the end of the war in Europe. But more importantly it is a study of the

GIs themselves. This is conveyed to us through 148 photos, many of which will be new to you. The majority of them are candid snapshots of the soldiers "up on the line." Men with rumpled uniforms, dirty faces and weary eyes just trying to make it to the next day. Steve Zaloga must have selected the photos with great care to vividly give us this glimpse of what it was like for the combat soldiers. We were quite touched after reflecting for awhile on some of the photos. It's not for anything that the men who fought WW II are known as "the greatest generation." There is a one-page introduction, as well as clear and informative captions for each picture, which is good. But the photos, if you study them closely, speak volumes for themselves. In addition to all the pictures there is a four-page section of outstanding color prints by Ron Volstad that accurately portray the GIs. This book should appeal to anyone interested in the war in Europe. Also it should give some great ideas to diorama builders or to those who do figures. This one is the real deal.

The various publishers provided the review samples. The exception is the Tiger title, which was submitted by Air Connection the North American agent for AJ Press.

Vietnam, here we come

Updating an old trooper, the Tamiya M113 ACAV



The M-113 was the follow up to the M-59 APC and began development in January 1956. Consequently, the M-113 had been around for a few years before the Vietnam conflict started. When the M-113's first arrived in Vietnam in 1962 they saw their first combat in the hands of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), not the U.S. Army. The Vietnamese soon learned that the most effective way to use the M-113 was not in the doctrinal role of assaulting a position and having the infantry dismount and continue the attack on foot. This was what the U.S. doctrine for the M-113 was at the time and indeed when I was first trained as an infantryman in 1967, it still was. The Vietnamese found it was better to stay mounted and continue heavy fire right from the vehicle. Once dismounted, the infantry lost all their advantage against the VC. Something else that was a little unusual with the ARVN's, was they did not permanently assign troops to their M-113s. When I was an advisor to the 2nd ARVN Infantry Division, 1 Corps, in 1970-71, their Armored Cavalry Squadron only had the crew of 2-3 soldiers per track, but no infantry. Instead, they filled them with infantry from their regular infantry regiments when they went on operations, which was not very often.

When the U.S. Army started to use the M-113 in Vietnam they also quickly learned to use the same doctrine as the Vietnamese. Additionally, to give them better protection and added firepower, they started modifying their M-113s. Shields were added to the .50 cal machine gun and M-60 machine guns were also mount-

ed, along with sandbags for protection. When the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was deployed to Vietnam in 1966, their M-113's had been fitted with special kits provided by Ford Motor Company (they built the M-113). These modified M-113's were known as the Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicle or ACAV, pronounced "A-CAV."

The initial production version of the M-113 had a Chrysler V-8 gasoline engine installed, but the Army wanted a diesel since it was in the process of trying to standardize diesel fuel for all its heavy tracked vehicles. In 1964, M-113 production switched to a diesel engine version designated the M-113A1. It took a number of years for the gasoline engine M-113's to be replaced or upgraded to the diesel version. I know as late as 1969 I was still driving a gasoline powered M-577 in Germany, although the M-113's in my battalion had been switched to diesel the year before. I personally preferred my gasoline engine to the diesel because it was a lot faster and more responsive than the slower accelerating diesel engine version. In a drag race, I could always beat the M-113s (not that we ever did that, of course).

A really old kit

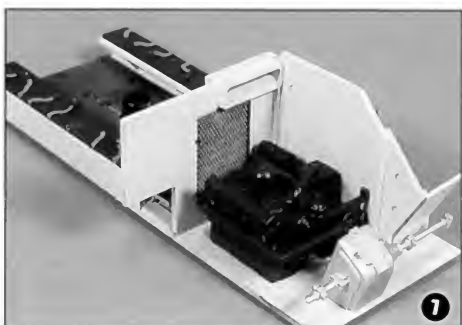
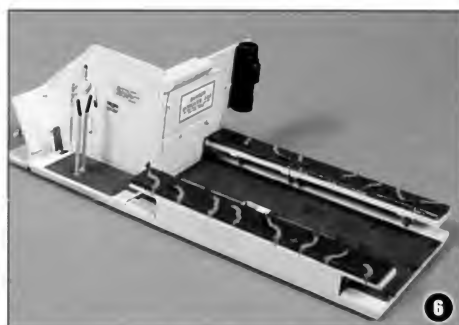
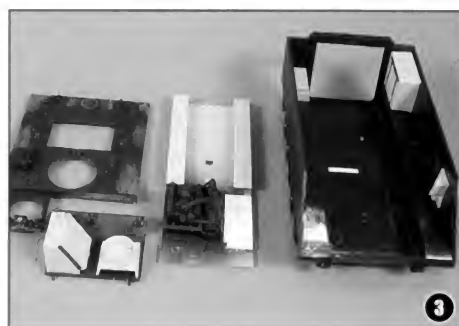
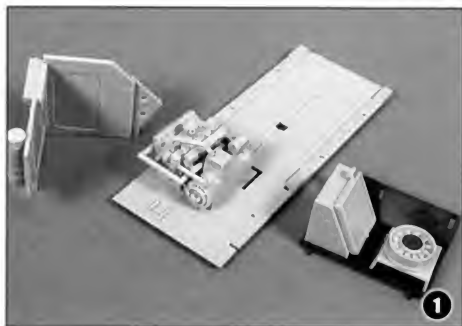
This kit is one of Tamiya's oldest, but it still looks pretty good. The interior is rather complete and the ACAV add on is very good. The reason I elected to build the Tamiya M-113 ACAV instead of the Academy offering was primarily to evaluate the new Eduard interior and exterior photo-etch sets for this kit. Eduard is supposed to issue the same type of set for the Academy version and may have by the time you read this article.

The kit consists of two of the standard dark green sprues for the M-113, plus a light gray sprue for the interior and a third dark green sprue with the ACAV items on it. The tracks are the old rubber band type so I replaced them with a Modelkasten workable track set. There are three rather crude figures included in the kit. There are a number of things wrong with this model and I have attempted to correct some of the more obvious mistakes. The kit is supposed to be a M-113A1, however it has a gasoline engine and a number of items that were only found on earlier versions of the M-113. Basically, my approach was to make this an early M-113 that had been converted to the A1. Well, almost.

Since this was going to be a rather involved project (because of the interior), I spent more time than usual planning the construction. I took the five different sheets of instructions from the two Eduard sets and circled all items in the Tamiya instructions where I had options for photo-etch replacement or enhancement. After careful research, I was able to determine a number of places where major corrections were needed. Since I was going to build the interior, I decided to complete that phase before starting the exterior. This included all the painting, decals and photo-etch parts. I also planned to leave a number of photo-etch parts off until after painting. The reason for adding the photo-etch last was that Eduard photo-etch has a natural metal finish, so I decided to take advantage of it, when possible.

Fill her up with gas or diesel, sir?

I started with the engine compartment by assembling



1. The basic components of the interior. I left off most of the photo-etch parts until after painting to take advantage of their natural metallic color. 2. For some unknown reason Tamiya left a big hole in the fender, which I filled with sheet styrene and putty. The rear opening in the floor was also filled but the square hole is for the seat column, which goes in later. 3. The start of the interior painting began with painting the engine. The fuel tank on the right side of the chassis can be seen along with the raised driver's platform. 4. The modification to the engine firewall included making two doors out of one. The hardware around the driver's side includes a pretty good representation of the gearshift. 5.

This danger sign is a combination of the kit decal for the lettering and a home made one for the white background with a border. There really should be two, one on each door, but the kit only had one. 6. The seat cushions were made from Tamiya Epoxy Putty. The seat belts came from the photo-etch set. 7. The transmission/differential was painted with Tamiya flat aluminum before installing. 8. The instrument panel is a combination of photo-etch and a piece of photo paper. The fire extinguisher is properly mounted on the wall and not on the track well ledge, which is where the kit has it. 9. The major components for the engine compartment top. The photo-etch parts were added after painting.

the engine. This is the first problem area because the kit is supposed to be a M113A1, but as I mentioned the engine is the Chrysler gasoline engine. At this scale it is not that easy to tell, but one thing I do remember is that diesel engines don't have Holley four-barreled carburetors. Anyway, I decided to just accept the kit engine, since I didn't have a diesel and once it is mounted in the engine compartment it is very difficult to tell the difference. I assembled the engine according to the instructions, but left off some of the pieces like hoses so I could paint them separately. Last, the engine was glued to the floor.

For some reason Tamiya left a hole in the hull on the front right side, over the idler. I filled this with sheet styrene and putty. I also removed the Tamiya logo and filled the long hole on the bottom with sheet styrene and then puttied it over.

The next problem was the rear of the firewall. This is part D38 and it has one large access door instead of two. I removed the old one and made two doors out of thin styrene. Fortunately, Eduard has some replacement clamps for it, which I used. On the driver's side, part D43, I replaced the gearshift housing with an Eduard assembly and added a few other new items included in the photo-etch set.

The driver's floor is supposed to be raised and not at the same level as the rest of the crew compartment,

so I glued on a piece of styrene to raise it. Eduard provides complete flooring for the whole compartment, so all I had to do was put this on top after I painted the interior. Another problem I could fix easily is the driver's seat. It does not attach to the floor; it attaches to the side of the track well. I cut off the bottom part of the seat mount, then waited until after the interior was installed to attach the seat.

Where to and not to make corrections

Some of the more important things I decided not to correct were the older style fuel tank and the filler cap on the top rear of the hull. The filler cap was moved when the new style of fuel tank was installed. So I glued in the fuel tank and instrument panel mount, D-10. I also added the seat backs and the battery box on the right side. The photo-etch mounts for the fire extinguisher and driver's periscope holder were glued on the wall behind the driver's seat. The kit incorrectly has the fire extinguisher mounted to the ledge.

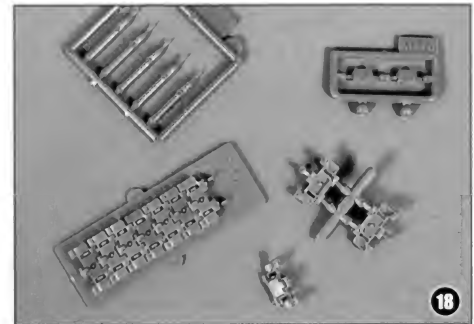
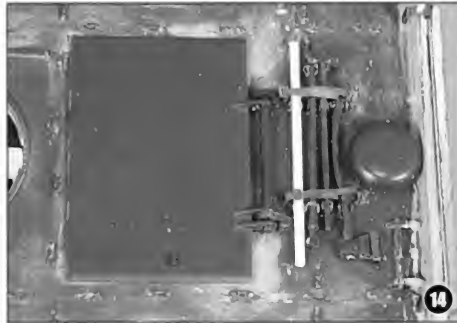
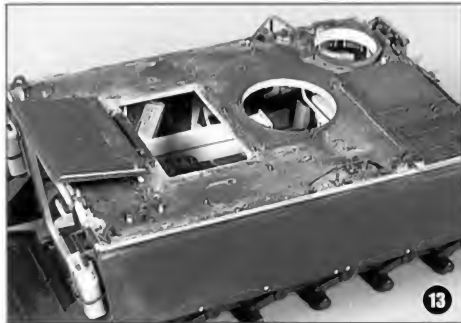
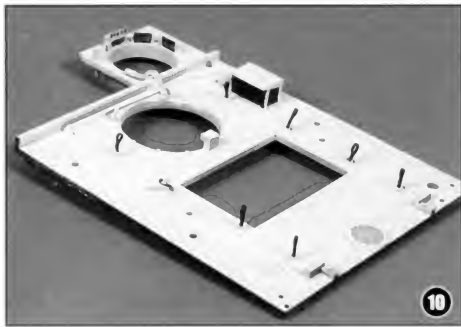
I added the seat bases and seats to the floor piece. I chose not to use the photo-etch braces, #32, since they would not have improved the look.

For the hull top, C-1, I removed all the tie down points on the upper surface. On the underside, I added the photo-etch handhold straps and the radio with its mount. I filled in the driver's periscope and glued the

photo-etch replacement, part 18, over it.

Now that the basic interior was complete, I started to paint it. I first painted the engine, exhaust fan and radiator with Tamiya XF-62 Olive Drab mixed with 10% XF-1 Flat Black. I then masked them off and painted everything else Tamiya X-28 Park Green mixed with 90% XF-2 Flat White. This seems to be a fairly close match to the normally very light mint green the interiors were painted. For the differential and air cleaner, I painted them Tamiya XF-16 Flat Aluminum. I then added the unpainted photo-etch parts for the radiator and air cleaner.

The heater was painted flat black and the fire extinguisher was painted red. These were then mounted. There are two decals provided in the kit for the interior. The first, which really should be two, was a large warning sign that is supposed to go on both access panels on the rear of the firewall. The problem with the decal is it only has the red lettering but no background. I made a white background with a red border using a Micro-Mark inkjet white decal sheet. I then put that on the door and added the lettering on top. There is another small sign that goes on the duct above the doors on the firewall. I also added a couple of placards next to the driver from my decal junk box. After everything was painted, I sprayed the whole interior with clear satin acrylic paint. This was to give it a slight shine like the real one,



10. The handholds and radio were added, plus the cover for the ventilator. **11.** The interior completed and weathered. The heater is that black thing on the right wall. The decals next to the driver's position were taken from an aircraft decal sheet. I guess they have to be good for something, right? **12.** The kit gas cans were terrible, so I replaced them with ones from the Verlinden set. **13.** Since this was an M113 in Vietnam I chose not to mount the side skirts, since they were rarely used. Instead, I added bolts, which would have been left in the mounting holes. **14.** The pioneer tool set, which is completely hidden when the hatch is open. I substituted the crowbar for a styrene rod

since it was easier than cleaning off the kit's crowbar. **15.** The commander's cupola was slightly modified with photo-etch shutters that can be either raised or lowered over the periscopes. **16.** The .50 cal with all its photo-etch parts and new shield. **17.** One of the two M-60 machine guns. The trays for the ammunition were a little difficult to put so I hope these photos help. **18.** The ModelKasten workable tracks consist of two parts, the pad and the link. It was not common but sometimes the pads were taken off in cold climates to get better traction; obviously not in 'Nam. The problem was trying to put them back on after the bolthole had been messed up.

since the interior was painted with gloss enamel.

For the passenger bench seats, the kit only provides the bench not the pad that goes on it. I made two pads out of Tamiya Epoxy Putty. I rolled these until they were thin enough. I then let the putty dry and cut out two pads just big enough for the benches. One thing I like about this putty is it remains flexible after it dries. The pads were painted olive drab then glued to the benches and given a coat of clear satin paint. I painted the seat belts provided in the photo-etch set and glued them on the seats.

I now assembled the firewall structure to the floor. All the photo-etch floorboards were glued down and the driving laterals were attached. This whole structure was slipped into the hull and glued down. The seats were attached, including the small platform that goes on the front of the seat column.

Before sealing up the interior I wanted to add some junk. I bought a Verlinden Vietnam vehicle stowage set and took a few items from it. I painted and weathered them the appropriate colors. I then glued these pieces into the interior before putting the top on to be sure they were well attached.

Topics on

The hull top was now glued on and all the photo-etch tie downs were glued on. I don't know why I do these

things. It seemed like a great idea as I was removing them, but while I was gluing them on I was cussing at myself. Anyway, when finished they actually look pretty good, so name your poison! I also glued on the hull front, B17, and the completed engine top, B5. I added the tools on the rear deck using the photo-etch mounts.

The rear ramp was then tackled and the mold release marks were removed. I then added the photo-etch parts, like the inside handle and the locking lever on the outside of the door. The kit's two five-gallon gas cans that are supposed to be on the back had to be replaced because of two things. First, they were hollow in the back, but more important they only have a single handle on top. I used two of the gas cans from the Verlinden set I used for the interior details.

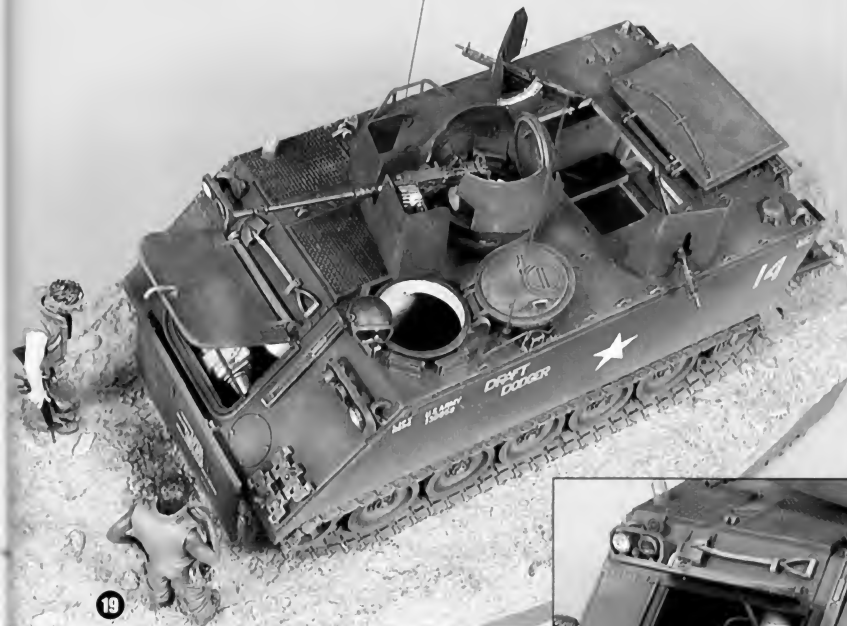
The front created some problems because I wanted the engine hatch open and the trim vane had to be down for this. The trim vane was supposed to be down at a 45-degree angle when taking the track into the water. It prevents water from washing into the crew compartment and sinking the track. I had a friend in my tank battalion who tried to swim his M-114 scout track without putting his down. The last I heard he was still trying to pay off an M-114. For the swimming plane, I filled in the four rather large and deep release marks by first filling them with round pieces of thin

styrene. I then sanded them down flat. The second thing was removing the two mounting plugs, which allow you to either mount the plane forward for swimming, or up in the stowed position. I saved one set of these mounts and glued them into the hull front so I would have a place to glue the trim vane on later.

The lights were drilled out to accept MV lenses after painting was complete. I decided not to use the Eduard parts for these because they were too thin. I found it easier to thin down the kit parts for the two covers, B6 and 7. The shovel was added using photo-etch straps and the photo-etch engine grills were glued down. The exhaust pipe was drilled out before gluing it on.

Let's make track

All the roadwheels and idlers were glued together in addition to the replacement drive sprockets that come with the ModelKasten track set. These were all cleaned up using an Emory board. The tracks are the workable type. The track pad is separate and must be glued on first. The jig that comes with the tracks allows you to assemble eight links at a time. I basically followed the instructions and had no problem. After the pins had been glued I did not wait until they were dry before trimming the sprue off. I then took the blunt end of a drill bit mounted in a pin vise and pushed each pin in to help make sure the links held together. In my



opinion, the only major problem with ModelKasten tracks is they are not strong enough.

The main commander's hatch base, B20, was cleaned up and the bottom and top halves of the armor were glued together. I then added the photo-etch periscope covers, #55, in the raised position. These two halves were then glued to B20. I added the photo-etch parts here and for the hatch, B18. I drilled out holes and used a piece of brass wire for the handle. Since this was a Vietnam version, I left the side skirts off. These are only good for swimming the track and have a very bad tendency to clog with mud. When they are taken off, the bolts are usually left in place so the holes will not fill with mud. I made bolt heads using a Historex hex punch and die set. I used the kit skirts for aligning the bolts to the right locations.

The .50 cal was cleaned up first by removing all the parts shown in the Eduard instructions, plus the barrel was drilled out. All the photo-etch pieces were added, except for the ammunition. The Eduard photo-etch ammunition in this set is terrible. The ABER 20 and .50 caliber machine gun belts are much better. I planned on using these, but only after the painting was complete. Thank goodness for the replacement photo-etch shields. The kit shields were full of release marks, which would have been very hard to remove. The shields went together without any trouble and look great.

Painting the old guy

Since the interior was already painted, the biggest problem I had was being sure not to over spray all the interior work. I first stuffed the insides with cotton balls and then stuck all the loose parts on 4" x 6" cards with masking tape. I then sprayed everything with Tamiya flat black as a base coat and after it dried I checked for flaws. I then lightly sprayed on a coat of olive drab mixed with about 10% flat black. The road-wheels were masked using a template and the centers were painted with this same color. I then painted the tool handles with Vallejo medium flesh and the wood stain. The metal items, like machine guns and tools, were painted with black-gray.

The tracks were sprayed with Polly Scale Panzer Red Brown and then the pads were painted with Vallejo black gray. They were then given a wash of black and burnt umber acrylic paints. I learned not to use turpentine-based thinners on these tracks since it tends to melt the pins.

For decal application, I first sprayed the exterior with clear gloss. The kit decals were then put on. The only exception was Archer white stars. The vehicle is from the C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, circa 1966. I then sprayed the whole track with clear flat to seal and flatten out the gloss. The model was then given a wash of very thin black oil paint. The lower part of the kit was then sprayed with

19. The base was made from simple sheet Styrofoam covered with tile grout, pebbles and static grass. The ammunition belts are from an ABER set. 20. The taillights were first painted with silver and red, then filled with Crystal Klear. 21. The headlights are LI28 and LI32 MV Lenses. 22. The rear door before it was lowered for good. All the decals, except the stars, are from the kit. The stars are from Archer's dry transfers.

a light coat of Tamiya XF-52 Flat Earth. Oils were used to dry brush everything, using mostly titanium white, sap green and burnt umber. Rub n' Buff silver was dry brushed on the tracks and various metal parts, including the machine guns.

For the periscope faces, I tried something for the first time on this kit. It is always very difficult to reproduce the metallic color of periscope glass. I used a product called Spangles. This is a very cheap item used for kids' jewelry and I bought mine in an arts and craft store. They have silver, gold and green, plus other colors. In this case, I used the green ones and just cut out the appropriate size and glued them to the periscope faces.

The MV lenses were added to the headlights using clear LI28 and IR LI32 lenses. The tracks were then put on. I also added ammunition belts to all the machine guns from an ABER set. I like these because they are in brass and all I have to do is paint the heads of the rounds in silver. I added a CVC helmet to the top of the driver's hatch, which also came from the Verlinden set.

Hey dude, I think this thing is broken

I wanted to show off all the interior work I had done so I planned on a simple vignette with a couple of

troopers (remember these are Cav soldiers, so they are called troopers). I found a couple of perfect figures made by Verlinden. They are from a three-figure set of Vietnam era infantry types standing around smoking and joking. I used two of the figures and left most of their gear and weapons off. The nice thing about this set is there are six heads to choose from so I picked a black and white soldier who looked very much like the troopers I knew in Nam with head bands and sunglasses.

The base was a simple piece of sheet Styrofoam that was cut out with a hot wire tool. A mixture of Cellucel and tile grout was mixed with cheap acrylic paint; I don't use my good Tamiya paints for this. I then sprinkled some different sizes of gravel and pushed them in while the mix was still wet. I applied a wash of more acrylic paint and then dry brushed with oil paints to pick up the highlights. Last, I sprinkled on some static grass and put an oil stain in front of the engine using very thin black paint.

Summary

Despite the age of this kit, it still builds into a good model. The photo-etch parts help, of course, along with the new ModelKasten tracks. This was a fairly complicated build, however, not because of the kit, but all the interior work that I did.

—Jim Hensley

MMiR RECCE

Tamiya U.S. M13 ACAV. Kit number 35135. Suggested retail price \$26.00.

Eduard M-113 ACAV Interior. Kit number 35390. Suggested retail price \$19.99.

Eduard M-113 ACAV Exterior. Kit number 35401. Suggested retail price \$19.99.

ModelKasten M-113 workable track. Kit number SK-36. Suggested retail price \$27.95.

Verlinden Military Vehicle Stowage US Vietnam. Kit number 1585. Suggested retail price \$13.95.

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Dunstan, Simon. *The M113 Series*. Osprey Vanguard 34, Osprey Publishing London, 1983. ISBN 0-85045-495-6.

Tunbridge, Stephen. *M113 in Action*. Squadron/Signal Publication, Inc. Carrollton, Texas 1978. ISBN 0-89747-050-8.

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Pygmy Panzer

The diminutive Tristar Panzer I Ausf. A



Due to restrictions placed upon them at the end of the First World War, the Germans had to sort of ease their way back into the tank business. A number of tracked platforms were developed as test beds and some of these were eventually produced. To simplify a long and complicated story, the Panzer I was initially developed from a series called the "Kleintraktor," or small tractor. After much testing and evaluation of the chassis and various armor arrangements, the vehicle eventually began production in early 1934 as the Panzerkampfwagen I (MG) (Sd.Kfz. 101) Ausf. A. The tank was armed with twin MG13s mounted in a small turret with a staggered arrangement. Although the armor was thin, ranging in thickness from 13mm (front and side plates) to 8mm (glacis), it was considered a very serious and successful design. The armor plate was of a very high quality and the basic overall design became the basis for almost all German tanks to come.

So, if this tank is so darned important, how come we don't have a plastic model of it? Good question. We kinda already do. This is a rather tough kit by a company called HiPM. Opinions of it vary, but I think the general consensus is "prognosis negative."

There is also a fantastic resin version produced by Accurate Armour. This includes a full interior and engine. However, being resin and therefore

expensive, it's not widely seen.

Enter a new enterprise call Tristar. Their most recent claim to fame has been several nicely executed styrene figure sets based on the work of Japanese figure sculptor Yoshitaka Hirano. Well, after a few figure sets, I guess they felt it was time to graduate to a full kit. To me, their choice of subjects wasn't the only thing that was significant. Mr. Yoshikatsu Tomioka, well known for his tooling work on the extensive line of ModelKasten tracks and accessories, developed the kit. You may not know his name, but you most certainly know his work. Mr. Hirano also weighs in on this kit with the contribution of two figures.

Whatcha get

There is a lot of action tucked away in this little box. There are six full sprues inside that make up all the parts for the kit and the two figures. The lower hull is a large part by itself. All the parts are molded in gray styrene. There are also dozens of the small ModelKasten track sprues and their attendant pins molded in the familiar brown color, a sheet of custom made Aber brass and a versatile decal sheet. So far, so good.

The instruction sheet is well produced with simple and easy to follow line drawings. The usual painting guide starts it off and this covers Tamiya, Gunze acrylics and Humbrol enamels.

Construction starts with the front hull mounts for the suspension units. These are not overly complex, but there are right and left units. The left-hand unit can be seen installed on the hull in **photo 1**. Both these units support a single roadwheel.

The main suspension units come next. One of these uses two standard size roadwheels, while the other uses the standard and a larger one that acts as the idler. These units also come in left and right flavors. I've laid out the two different sized wheels and the rear unit's two halves in **photo 2**.

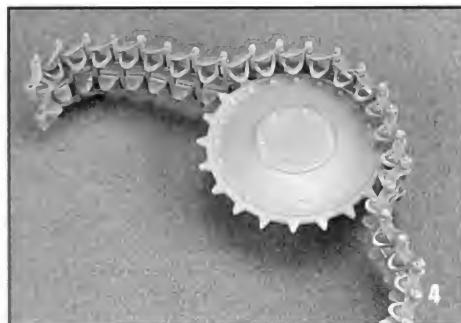
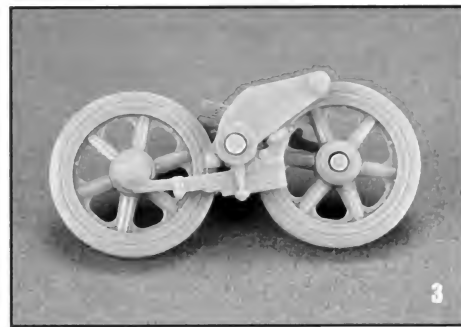
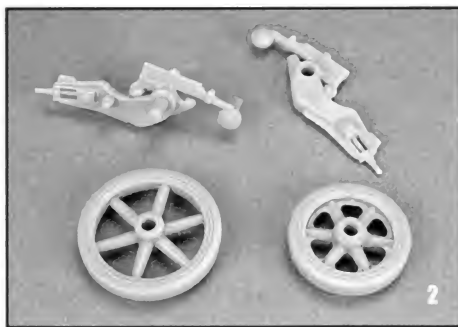
A finished center unit is shown completed in **photo 3**. The large circular post seen in the center bar engages the familiar crossbeam. The front solo wheel has a separately molded hub to cap it off.

All the units mount on the hull firmly, but care should be taken to ensure that they are all level and straight.

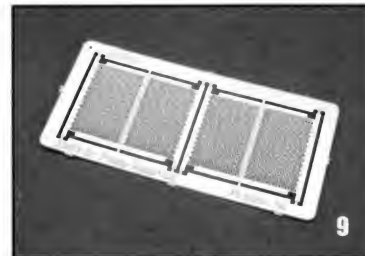
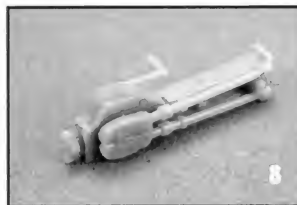
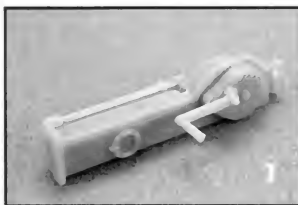
It is a good idea to keep glue away from the wheels. Since they have to be built within their suspension units and right on the tank, they can't be left off for painting. So, spinning is the only love you're gonna get.

And speaking of spinning, the drive sprocket cannot be left to rotate. I thought this would cause difficulties later when adding the tracks, but it didn't really affect their installation.

I decided to get the tracks out of the way at this stage. The construction of all ModelKasten tracks is



pretty standard stuff. No jig is necessary to align these particular links. They simply tip in to one another and then are secured with a single pin. As always with ModelKasten tracks, one has to be very careful not to corrupt the pins with glue. The finished runs can be seen wrapped around one of the sprockets in **photo 4**. There are right and left runs. The final product is gorgeous, but the runs do remain very delicate. Both were set aside for painting.

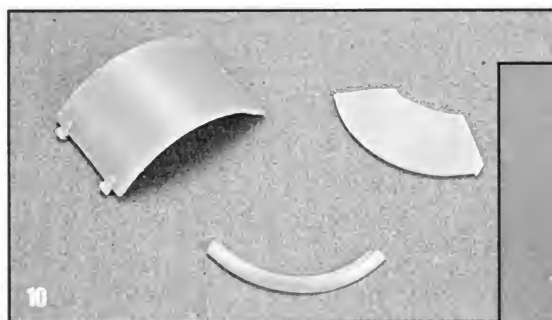


Heck of a hull

As mentioned, the lower hull is more or less one piece. There are only three panels needed to complete the assembly, the front, rear and engine fire wall. The complete assembly can be seen in **photo 5**, where I am adding the suspension components. The firewall panel is detailed on the inside face and it looks like an interior is inbound (a full resin interior from Tristar has been announced since this article was written). This panel is shown in **photo 6**.

I actually completed the hull first in order to ensure there was no warping or racking in the hull. All the panels fit perfectly. This is also true of the large top hull panel. This is added to the lower hull with the front glacis plate and a small rear panel. This small panel has some exquisite tooling on it, specifically the teeny screens on either side. There was some very minor filling needed on the outside edges of this panel (CI30), but that was the only case on the entire hull.

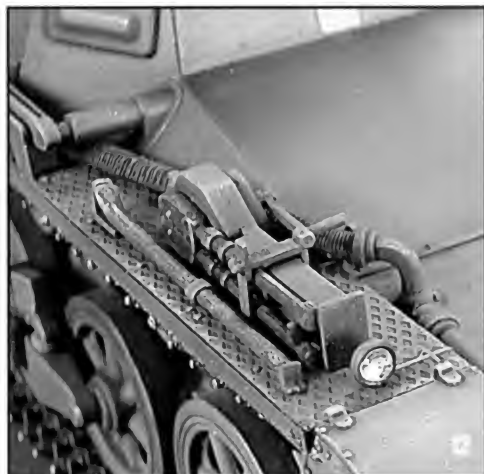
The completed hull is detailed with a variety of small parts, all very well rendered. Among those I was especially impressed with were the exhaust hoses and all the

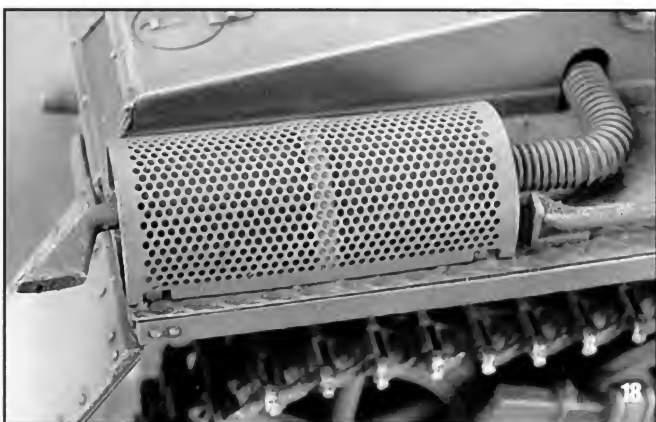
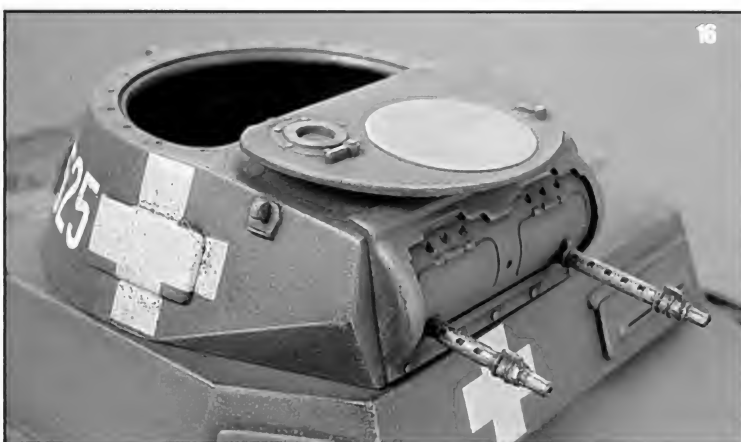


exterior tools. The very early jack has been broken down into three pieces to increase the level of detail. A pair of wire cutters is mounted on the outside face of the jack. It's not mentioned in the instructions, but this is one of several small details that denote this vehicle as a later production model.

More on this later. The completed jack is shown in **photos 7 and 8**.

Interestingly, the hull lifting hooks are rendered solid. They are approximately scale thick-





ness, but without the "hook hole." A fresh x-acto blade would open them up with no problem.

A small sheet of photo-etch contains the distinctive muffler screens. These must be formed into an arch that covers each muffler. The parts curved out perfectly and they fit over the muffler parts equally well. This is an excellent example of what two different modeling companies can do when they put their heads together. The sheet as it comes from the box is shown in **photo 9**.

Another interesting detail of the kit is the separately provided fender lips. These are added to the long side fender panels, as well as the curved front panels. This creates a very fine gap, which gives the effect of photo-etch, without all the trouble. The lip can be seen, along with the other parts of the front

fender panels in **photo 10**. Both the front and rear panels were left off in order to add the tracks and for painting.

Some later tanks were retrofitted with armored cowlings for the rear deck and these are provided in the kit as an option. I thought this was a nice touch, but I left them off my model. That screen tooling is just too nice.

For such a small part of the model, the turret is composed of sixteen parts. Especially noteworthy are the finely detailed MG 13s and the hatch interior, which

is fully detailed on its interior face. The hatch encompasses nearly the entire top of the turret, so you will need to stick a figure in there to obscure the view. The completed turret is seen in **photo 11**.

Some of the last parts added to the model were the small headlights on the front fenders. There is also a larger light in the center of the glacis plate. A part is provided to install into this light (C18) and I initially thought this was some type of blackout cover. However, after looking at my references, I believe it's just supposed to represent the reinforced glass of the light (the only cover I could find was a canvas one). I mention this because it would be a terrific location for a MV lens. I did later add lenses (LS26) to the smaller lights after drilling them out (**photo 12**). This set is nice because it contains four

lenses, so you have some to lose!

Painting Vor!

The model was painted using good 'ol Tamiya German Grey (XF-63). This went over a black base to deepen the intensity of the topcoat. Subtle highlights were added with small amounts of white mixed into the base color. This model is so small that you'll have it painted in no time at all.

Four schemes are provided in the kit's comprehensive decal sheet, including a rather nifty one of a vehicle serving in the Spanish Civil War. I chose a scheme from the Polish campaign, because of its large yellow crosses. A tactical number is also provided, but no unit insignia (**photo 13**).

I prepped the finish with several light coats of Tamiya clear and after drying overnight, the decals were applied using Solvaset. Because three of the crosses had to lie down around vision ports on the turret, several applications of Solvaset were necessary.

When everything was dry, a dark oil wash was applied and a slightly thicker mixture was used to accentuate all the small details. Dry brushing was accomplished using the old Andrea/Vallejo paints. The old Andrea Medium Grey, number 19 is the perfect highlight for Tamiya XF-63. I'm not sure what this translates to when compared with the standard Vallejo line (**photo 15**).

The tools were also painted with Vallejo paints (**photo 14**) and about the only other deviation was the circular pad on the inside turret hatch. This appears to be a lighter shade than the hull. I went with kind of a field gray (**photos 16, 17**).

The lower hull was given a heavy dusting of

Tamiya Buff and this was also lightly sprayed on the upper surfaces, as well. When all was dry (again), the model was sprayed with Vallejo flat. I usually wait until after drybrushing and washing to do this because these processes can still cause some shininess to appear.

The tracks were painted with Vallejo Gun Metal and then given a wash of dark brown pastels suspended in Tamiya acrylic thinner. When this had dried, they were drybrushed with Tamiya Flat Aluminum.

Fishing the tracks through the suspension was tricky, especially with the sprocket fixed in position. The instructions suggest 87-88 links per side. I went with 88, but I took a few out at the last minute to get the proper sag. As always, the MK tracks remain ultra delicate and mine did break several times.

The front and rear fenders were added last and the front ones were quite delicate. Some micro fine glue points cause this, but the finished fit was good.

The figure is an Azimut item with a Hornet head and right arm. He's posing for a picture to send home to Mom...

Whatcha end up with

The end result is a very pleasing little model. It is little, too, measuring only 4 5/8" from fender to fender. The fit and execution was first rate throughout the kit and it ended up being a very short "out of the box" experience. Overall accuracy appears to be quite good. On just the normal geek level, I found a few small things, such as missing bolt detail around the turret visors and a missing lifting tab on the transmission access plate. According to information found in the new Jentz title (see below), the kit appears to represent what is known as a 3.Serie/La.S vehicle. The distinguish-

ing features would be the armored strip below the left side hull hatch, the addition of the wire cutter to the jack and a narrower transmission access plate (this was increased in size by 4.Serie/La.S). The tracks are the solid horn type, which I believe, were only retrofits. This was the type common to the Ausf. B. Ausf. As were manufactured with a pierced horn link.

Another minor nit is the shape of the final drive housings. The bottom of the hull actually extended out into the bottom of the housings so that they are flat, instead of round. This same mistake is also found on the Italeri Ausf. B kit.

For the serious accuracy geek, there are a few additional errors when comparing the kit to the new Jentz plans. The most significant appears to be that the Tristar hull is a little too low and the upper hull is too far back on the chassis (my guess is about two scale inches). Other major dimensions, including the suspension layout, appear to be dead on. With all this new information on hand, I'm sure you can spend a lot of quality time locked in your basement this winter finding more. To be completely

fair, it should be mentioned that this kit was developed long before any of this new information was available in book form.

The new Tristar kit represents an outstanding value for the money. Not only because it has great tooling and near perfect fit, but because it contains a full set of ModelKasten tracks, Aber brass (photo 18) and two expertly rendered figures. If you purchased the tracks by themselves, they'd cost \$24.95. All this love comes packaged for a mere \$42.95. About my only real gripe is that if styrene companies are going to go the photo-etch route, why not give us naked tools and clasps as an alternate? It seems that if you're going to work it, why not work it all the way?

I hope to see additional kits from Tristar. Some of the components could be utilized to create an accurate Ausf. B kit and one could also easily back date this kit into an earlier "Serie." There is also a great opportunity to add an interior and other inside goodies.

I'm calling this one a winner! 

—Pat Stansell

MMiR RECCE

Tristar German Panzer I Ausf A Sd.Kfz. 101. Kit number 35003. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail \$42.95.

References

Panzertracts No. 1-1 Panzerkampfwagen I, Kleintracktor to Ausf. B, assembled by Thomas L. Jentz with scale prints by Hilary Louis Doyle. ISBN 0-9708407-6-4. About the only source you'll ever need on these two little tanks. Rare photos, specs, several 1/24th-scale plans, dozens of interior photos and a comprehensive development history. If you have questions, this is the place to answer them. A bit pricey for a soft cover, hundred-page book at \$29.95, but just what is good reference material worth these days? (Apparently, thirty bucks!) It definitely has a place on your bookshelf.

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The Marder marches on!

EXAMINING TAMIYA'S LATEST RENDITION



Just when you thought that one Marder was enough from Tamiya, they go and give us another one. Now, ever since the Panther, Tamiya has been shy about doing “variants.” Both the StuG G and the Panzer III L never had their very logical follow-up releases. The Wespe was another head scratcher. That gorgeous 10.5cm gun sprue just seemed to hang out there all by itself, sort of saying: “wait until you see me as a full kit.” (Or something like that)

Well, if you were happy with the earlier Marder, you’re really gonna love this one. Rather than delve back into the history of the vehicle, I’ll just refer you back to Tanner Namoitka’s article on the Eagle CZ resin Marder II in issue 30 of *MMiR*. I can’t really improve on that, except to tell you that the vehicle represented by the Tamiya kit is a later vehicle with a riveted hull, and a welded and riveted driver’s station. The earlier version had a cast driver’s station.

And because I think the kit deserves a closer look, I’m going to bring you my review in the form of a photo article. Before starting my mega-captions, I will say that I used Tamiya Ultra Thin Cement (liquid) throughout construction, along with superglue for some of the smaller parts and red putty as a filler when needed. Let’s go to the captions!

—Pat Stansell





1. Among the first thing you'll notice about this kit is that the hull is a multi-part subassembly composed of three flat panels. I believe this is a first for Tamiya, as I can never recall their tank hulls being anything but tub-shaped. The parts fit together perfectly and the advantage is clearly seen in considerably more detail and no under cuts. This is noticeable here in the suspension mounts and forward hull. By the way, this kit shares only the wheel sprue in common with the first Marder kit. 2. The upper hull is

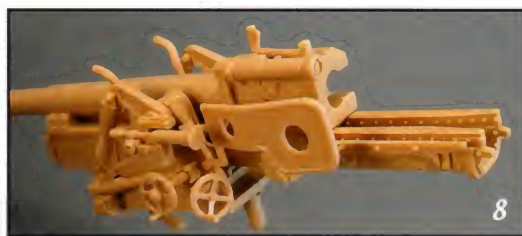


also a single piece and this gets mated with the rear firewall and the back hull plate. Adding the fighting compartment floor gets you to this stage. The fit of all the parts was extremely precise and there was no warp or rack, before or after assembly. I have also added the main suspension components here. 3. A closer look at the suspension. This type of suspension doesn't move too much, but you could pose it articulated over rough terrain without difficulty. The openings for the engine vents are seen here and this is a super



touch, even though there can be barely seen through the outside louvers. The fender mounting point is also seen here, along with the opening for the driver's side visor. Check out the detail around the final drive, too. 4. This is the aforementioned fighting compartment floor. No additional detail parts have been added to the kit at this stage. 5. These are the two main superstructure parts. Note the interior reinforcement strips where the smaller armored panels meet. Sinkholes were a problem on the first Marder and

they are present here, as well. They are pretty minor and were quickly filled. I found later that the interior gear mostly obscures this area, but it's still a good idea to fill them. 6. This is the gun shield for the 7.5cm gun. I guess that slotted screw detail is why Tamiya gets the big bucks. Pretty impressive. 7. The interior of the shield gets a few details. The top panel and cowling are separate pieces. The braces sticking out of the top panel are for the shield mounted periscopes. The two dimples on either side of the cowling are the



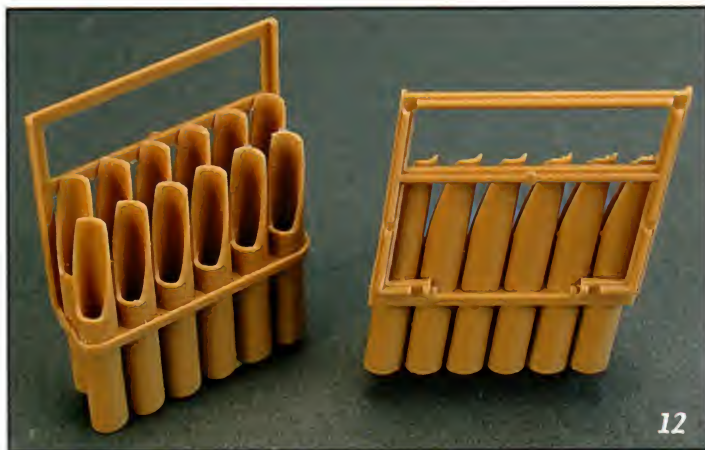
11. Several rounds and empty cases are provided, along with gas mask containers, spare tracks and a well executed figure.

mounting points for the gun. 8, 9. The 7.5cm gun is all-new for this kit and it's spectacular. Construction is standard stuff. The barrel is in two pieces and the breech is integral to these parts, with the top and back of the breech molded separately. The cradle is also split along its length and is only a total of four parts. To align the cradle and barrel, I left the barrel on top of the cradle until both dried,



then removed it. The carriage assembly encompasses the cradle and the various linkages and hand wheels are added, along with the sight. Note the stamping on the back of the breech in photo 9. 10. Even though it's split, they still managed to work in the retaining strip and bolt on the top of the muzzle brake.





12

12. Among the more amazing parts found in this kit, are the hollow molded shell racks. Each of the assemblies seen here is just three parts, the two rack rows and the square back brace. The thickness of the racks are not to scale and will not actually accommodate a round unaltered, but they look pretty nice. I'm a bit surprised that



14

special rounds were not provided that fit down into the cavities. Of course, you could carve them up yourself. One detail you may want to add to your model is the straps that secured each shell in their tubes. The racks are also often seen covered with canvas covers. These were custom built

for the racks with square corners. They reach about half way down each rack. 13. This is the ready round rack installed on the left side of the hull. 14. The completed left side superstructure panel. Unfortunately, you won't get a view like this when the model is completed. The seat and tool box are in evidence here and they are also little marvels of detail. The shallow sinkholes can be seen, as well as the armor plate joining strips. 15. The right side panel with the radio and its transformer. There



13



15



16

is quite a bit of wiring that can be done in this area. The radio, transformer, antenna and the crew comm system are all wired together. The diagram provided identifies the kit parts by number, along with the scratch built components. Some of the other sinkholes are visible here. 16, 17. Here, both the panels have been installed on the chassis. Some of the other detail parts have been added, such as the right side seat (check out the tooling on the cushion) and the MP 40. 18. Holdover parts from the 38t were few by the time the Marder IIIM hit the street. This is one of them, the left side pierced fender tool box. The standard German (and Tamiya) jack is installed on top. 19. As mentioned, the only common sprue



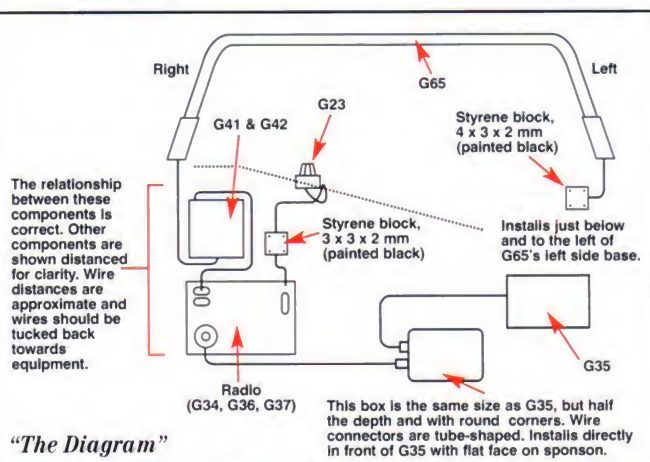
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19

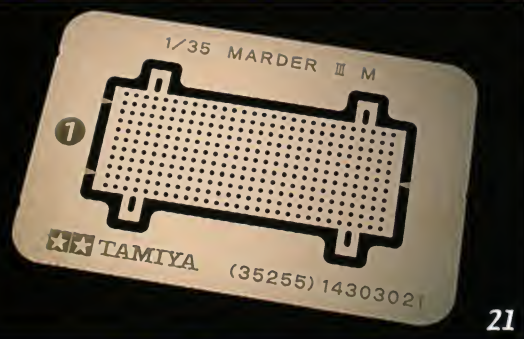


between the two Marder kits is the wheel sprue. This works out well, as this sprue also contains the Czech MG and shovel—handy parts to have around. This photo shows the detail on the front and back of the wheels. 20. Perhaps the most stunning subassembly of the kit is the travel lock. This is Tamiya at its best. It can only be shown in the unlocked position, but it will still move up and down, which makes painting around it easier. Note the actuator arm emanating from inside the hull. 21. The rare Tamiya photo-etch animal makes an appearance in this kit. Always a welcome sight, this fret represents

the thin shield that is wrapped around the rear mounted muffler. 22, 23. Wrapping it around a specifically thick part of sprue "F" curves the part. A small spool of copper wire is supplied to secure the etched part. I used superglue to secure the wire. This was fortunate, because the twisted wire interferes with the fit of the part. When the glue dries, the wire can simply be trimmed back. 24. The kit was painted completely with Tamiya paints. The base coat was Dark



20



21

Red Brown, XF-64. The front spare tracks were often painted in the base dark yellow at the factory. This was sometimes also true of the upper spares. I split the difference and left the lower one the base coat with camo. 25. The driver's hood on the right side of the hull. The tools were painted with a mix of Tamiya and Vallejo paints. The distinctive Czech made shovel is mounted and was "scratched" with a Berol pencil. The many rivets were picked out with an oil wash and all the surfaces were drybrushed with lighter shades

Yellow, XF-60. The circular blotches were created with Dark Green, XF-61 and the centers were carefully sprayed with Yellow, XF-60. The markings are a modified version of one of the schemes suggested in the kit. I thought the tactical numbers on the kit's decal sheet were too small, so I replaced them with numbers from an Archer dry transfer sheet. This was also true of the three hull crosses. These are about the same size as those provided on the decal sheet. The finished muffler looks good with its photo-etched shield. The rods on either side of the hull were used to support a tarp. These ultra delicate parts were added last. 27, 28. Right and left views of the finished interior. The kit instructions indicate the installation of the two forward panels after the installation of the gun. This was impractical for painting, so the gun, with its shield attached, was left out. Getting the gun back in the hull after painting is a bit of a trick. This is made significantly easier if the back panel is left in the lowered position. Either way, it takes a little time and patience. The bar that spans the fighting compartment was also painted separately—the gun won't install with it in place. The fit of this part is so precise that it can just be dropped in place after final weathering. 29. This is a close-up of the travel lock in its raised position. If you are going to be transporting the model, it will function just like the real thing.



22



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26



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MMiR RECCE

Tamiya Marder IIIM German Tank Destroyer. Kit number 35255. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price \$39.00.

References

I'll just refer you again to the article in issue 30, but here are a few more that I dug up. *Panzer at Saumur No. 3*, Dai Nippon Kaiga, 1992. ISBN 4-499-20597-2. Very nice color coverage of the Marder IIIM at Saumur. This may actually be the vehicle that the kit is based on. *Sturm & Drang No. 3, Panzerjäger, Tank Magazine Special Issue*, November 1993, Delta Publishing Co. Ltd. Covers several different German self-propelled AT guns. Hopelessly out of print, it may still be found out there somewhere. Some of this same material has since been republished in the Ground Power series.

RUBBER DUCKY

FLOATING THE NEW ITALERI AMPHIBIAN

So, you'd like to see a Duck in plastic? Kar-blam! Continuing the theme started with the LVTs, it's a Duck from our 'ol buddies at Italeri (like I had something to do with it). You know, rumors have been floating around for years that Tamiya was going to do this subject, but that turned out to be untrue. I think the background of those rumors revolves around the fact that Tamiya is Italeri's distributor in Japan. Either way, I'm happy.

You know all about the Duck, right? What? Slim on facts? Let me fill you in a bit. The Duck was originally conceived as an amphibious platform built on an existing truck chassis. The goal: moving equipment quickly back and forth from ship to shore and beyond. There was considerable wrangling during the development phase of the trucks and due to that old bugaboo, inter-service rivalry, there was even some talk of scrapping the whole project. That is until two Duck prototypes were used to rescue a Coast Guard crew off of Cape Cod. Legend has it that they had the crew back on the beach in six minutes. Needless to say, this got the project back in high gear. Interestingly, the original vehicle was to be based on the chassis of the AFKW 353 forward cab 25-ton truck. This was later changed to the standard and more familiar CCKW 353 chassis. The final version of the Duck was manufactured in very high numbers, a total of 21,247 being cranked out by 1945. Manufacturers included the Yellow Truck Co., and GMC Truck and Coach, along with other divisions of GMC.

What's with all those freakin' letters?

Oh yeah, here's how you tell all of the GMC 2.5-ton trucks apart. General Motors used a simple letter code to identify the various models of their trucks. The year of design was the first. "A" stood for 1939; "B" for 1940; "C" for 1941 and "D" for 1942. The next designation was for the type of vehicle. "C" stood for the standard cab; "F" for the

forward mounted cab and "U" was for an amphibian. The next designator was to indicate if the vehicle had front wheel drive. This was the letter "K." Rear wheel drive was denoted by the letter "W" and the letter "X" denoted a special chassis, such as an extra long wheel base. There were only two versions of the basic chassis, numbered 352 (short wheel base) and 353 (longer, normal wheel base). So the standard "Deuce and a half" is labeled CCKW-353. Our friend the "Duck" was so named because of its designator: DUKW-353. This soon became just "Duck." I guess "duke-wa" doesn't have the same ring to it.

They were over 800 small changes made to the Duck during its production run, but most of these were just tweaks. The first 2,005 vehicles had a vertical windshield and their spare tires were mounted on the left, rather than the right. These early trucks also had a "surf board" that could cover the windshield, leaving the driver to peer through two small portholes. After 2,005, the windshield took on its more familiar, slanted form and the windshield splash vane was eliminated. Starting in December 1943, trucks were manufactured with an integral tire inflation system. This allowed the driver to select the pressure that best suited the terrain conditions. Final production vehicles can be seen with horizontal slits in the hull reinforcing elements. This kept water from accumulating behind them and causing rust.

As always, we were generous with the Duck and it also saw service with the British and French armies. The Soviets also got them and they returned the favor

by ripping them off and making their own version in the fifties. The service life of this handy truck was vast, the Brits retired theirs in 1974 and the French retired theirs in 1980! There are still plenty out there running as restorations or as water tour ferries.

Oh, I forgot, the model

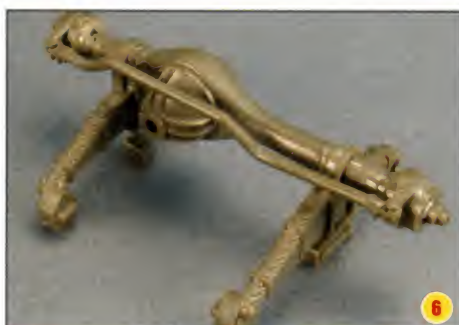
I was terribly excited to get my hands on this model (I don't get out much) and initial impressions were good. This kit is essentially just four huge pieces of plastic and a ton of detail parts. There are only four sprues in the kit and one of those is the teeny clear parts sprue. The bottom hull is a marvel with all its various curves, ribs and protuberances. The bottom and sides are separate parts. The upper hull is molded with both the cargo bay and the cockpit in place. The forward engine compartment is open for the aftermarket to have a ball with.

I skipped around the instructions quite a bit and I started with joining all the hull parts. I figured that if there were any fit problems or filling, I could get that out of the way first.

Surprisingly, for parts this large, there are no significant fit problems. I did discover a slight gap in the rear top of the hull, but a few styrene shims fixed it. The gap is actually under the slight overhang on the rear deck, near the winch, so it's easily hidden.

Next, I turned to the running gear and suspension. This is real familiar territory to anyone who has built the older Italeri trucks. Everything looked really good when complete and there was only one fit problem. The mounting plates for the rear trans axle assemblies are small and fit loosely within their placement cavities. However, with





1. This is the three large hull parts assembled. 2. The view from the inside. You know, I think it would really float! 3. The cockpit with the instrument panel and the various shifters in place. Note the needles on the gauge faces. 4. The cavernous cargo bay. This is an integral part of the upper hull. 5. The rear transaxle is familiar territory to anyone who has built the old Italeri 2.5-ton truck. 6. The front axle and steering gear. 7. The wheels, sans hubs. The front and rear wheels have different hubs. 8. The hull bottom with the drive train and prop in place. 9. The front towing clevis and the forward rope array are a single part, right to the large rope bumpers. 10. The split ends of the rope bumper are joined together after being passed through the u-hook.

the wheels on, this is barely noticeable.

The front stabilizers (76c) are very delicate when installed. The chassis was really the only handling point later during construction and I heard that chilling snap sound more than a few times. Also on the delicate side are the two front tow hooks, 78c. Every time I set the hull down, they bent, then finally broke. Either leave them off, or replace them as I did, with Tamiya parts.

The upper hull fine detail is exquisite. There are rivets molded on that are so small, even dry brushing will miss them. The lower hull, too, shows a lot of love, with its delicate weld lines.

I've heard whispers that the slots in the hull denote a postwar vehicle. There is actually no such thing, as

production of the Duck stopped just as the war did. Admittedly, these slots are tough to find in wartime photos, but they can be seen. Perhaps this was some type of suggested maintenance modification.

Back on top, the cockpit was completed along with the windshield area. I left the seats and steering wheel off for painting. There are a couple of issues on the top forward hull. The front splash vane can only be constructed in the raised position. If you want to display it in the collapsed position, you have to carve it up a bit. I cut two slots into the bottom of the vane panel and thinned down the panel arms, along with cutting off their slanted ends. The whole thing will now collapse just like the real thing.

There was also a fit problem just in front of the large screens that are located on the outside of the cockpit. Parts 24a and 25a had a small gap when installed. I had to fill this area with putty and the resulting clean-up wiped out several of the fine rivets found in this area. If you back fill the part prior to installation, this will not be a problem.

Completion of the upper hull involves the installation of the cargo bay sides and adding the detail parts to the rear hull. A very nice anchor is provided (along with a great boat hook), but there is no specific place to install it. The real anchor is

simply strapped to the rear deck. The front mounted hand pump and tool suite are also well executed.

The winch is a basic two piece assembly that looks pretty good when complete. A styrene lead and hook get added to finish it off.

I left some of the more delicate pieces off until last, such as the prop shaft and the rudder. These parts are very easy to snap off, so be careful. The same is true for all the tie-down hooks around the upper edge of the hull. These parts are very much to scale and wonderfully rendered, they just need a bit more care in handling.

Getting roped in

Perhaps the most ingenious part of the kit is the rope and rope bumper array. These were the very last parts added prior to painting, as all the other parts influence their fit. Using liquid glue, the first part added is the forward towing clevis. This has been cleverly rendered with its rope extensions molded right in. These, in turn, match up with the first set of rope bumpers. The back end of both sets of bumpers is molded with the rope loops split. They line up perfectly with the large u-hooks on the side. A little super glue closes the loop and the finished effect is very cool.



11. A little trimming was necessary to get the front splash vane into the collapsed position. 12. This is the end result of all that hacking. 13. The very nice anchor and boat hook supplied in the kit. 14. The completed rear hull after the addition of the winch. Note where the rope bumper meets the area to either side of the winch. 15. The front end of the finished kit has a nicely complex look. Note the molded-on wing nuts forward of the engine hatch. 16. The tow hooks at the bottom of the hull are notoriously delicate. I replaced them with Tamiya parts. The kit's headlights were used after painting the interior of the housings silver.

The rear array doesn't fit quite as well. I had to do some minor filling to get it to close up, but the effect was just as nice. The one thing that is not accurate here is the two tie-down loops on the rear hull. These are shown as the termination point for the rear rope array and they are shown placed near the second reinforcing rib from the winch. These loops are actually located right next to the winch opening. Not too big a deal, I guess.

One thought that struck me was that some of the rope on the bumper array could easily be replaced by model ship rope. This would solve any fit problems and increase the realism of your model.

If it moves, paint it

The kit was painted overall Tamiya Olive Drab

(XF-62). Mixing in small amounts of Dark Yellow created the highlights. The tools were painted using Vallejo paints. I used the kit's decals and they went down well with a couple of coats of Solvaset over a light coat of Tamiya Clear. A choice of three schemes is provided and I picked the 1945 scheme and modified it with the addition of a "Rubber Ducky" logo. For this, I used Archer generic lettering

and hand painted the ducky.

The kit's decal sheet does provide some of the placards seen on the real thing, but I supplemented them with placards from Fingerprint Designs. The area just below the windshield had two huge banks of placards to remind the driver of everything from tire pressure to shift pattern. Later Ducks with tire inflation systems also had elaborate stencils on either side of the cockpit.

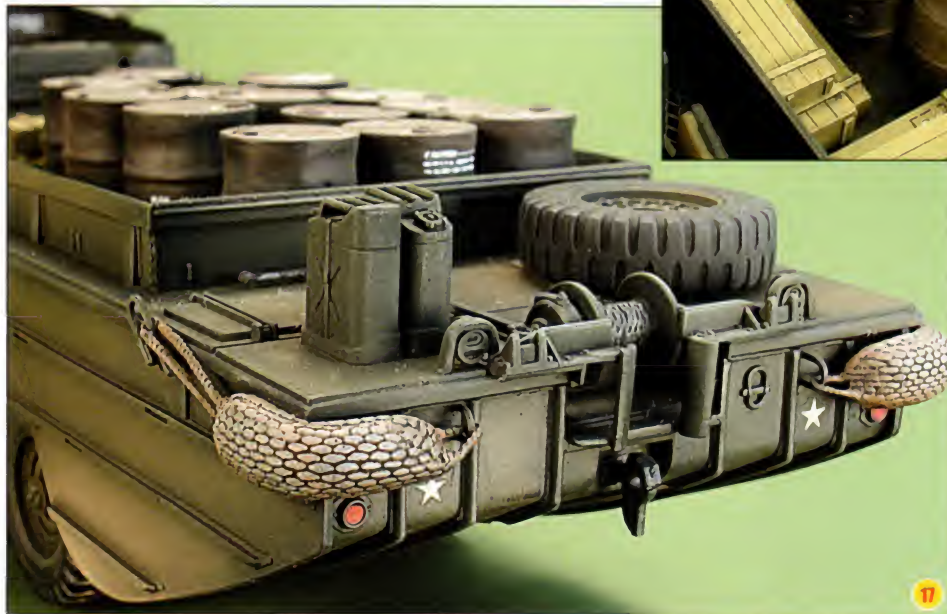
The kit's instrument panel has gauges molded with their raised needles. I carefully scraped these off and smoothed the area over with a small amount of Tamiya Ultra Thin liquid cement. This stuff is great for scratches and other small imperfections. After painting, I used the full array of Fingerprint gauge decals to dress it all up. When everything had dried (and after the final coat of Vallejo flat), each gauge got a drop of Tamiya Clear.

Another note of warning. I didn't realize this until I was installing them, but the front clear window parts have a frame that needs to be masked and painted prior to installation. The side windows were also installed at this point.

The rope bumper system was painted a brown color and then covered with a heavy wash of black oil paint. The texture of the system is really first rate and I wanted to bring all that detail out. Drybrushing with shades of light tan also helped to do the trick.



17. The completed back end. The attachment point for the rear ropes are only partially correct. They should lie nearly flat against the hull. 18. The load is composed of Verlinden 55-gallon drums and boxes from Custom Dioramics. 19. This shot shows off all of the extra decals I added to the dash area. The side glass panels kept popping out as seen here on the right side. 20. A large screen occupied the space behind the seats. This was the start of an elaborate bilge system that directed water taken in over the windshield.



If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck...

This is really quite a good kit, despite some small errors. None of these are even beyond the skill of a novice modeler to fix. I grew to like the kit more and more as it neared completion. The only items that I was displeased with were those that were not included in the kit. Significantly absent were the fairings for the wheel wells, the rear splash vane for the cargo compartment (this also acted as the rear of the cargo tarp system) and the bows for the cargo compartment. I would also have liked to have seen the tire inflation gear included as an option (the gauge is on the panel, it's the large one on the far right). But these are pretty minor and shouldn't stop anyone from buying this fine kit.

As far as overall dimensional accuracy goes, according to dimensions cited in the tech manual, the length was dead-on and the width and height were also very close—within 1-2 scale inches. Close enough for government work!

I will definitely build another one of these kits, as the detailing and conversion possibilities are vast. Ducks had a ton of rigging for the tarps and other gear and that's practically a project in itself. Azimut of France has already released a detailing set (35339) and Aber and Eduard can't be far behind. It's a duck! 

—Pat Stansell



Minus the wheels, the lower part of the vehicle received a light over spray of Tamiya Buff. Oh, and about those wheels. I have also heard talk about these being the wrong type for a wartime version. After poring over my references, the only thing I noticed was that the tire doesn't quite have the same curved crown. In other words, they should be more rounded across the face. I don't consider this much of a problem. As far as the rims go, they are basically accurate. The center section could have a bit more relief, but the bolt pattern and style are correct. The only thing missing is the slot for the tire inflation valve. This, incidentally, is also where the auto inflation system installs.

I weathered the wheels a little differently, using a modified "Marcus Nichols" method. I first painted the tires black, then washed them with Tamiya Buff. When this was dry, they were dry-brushed with shades of dark gray and black.

To load up my Duck, I chose several 55-gallon drums from the VP Super Value set and a few crates and boxes from the Custom Dioramics "Deuce and a half" load set.

MMiR RECCE

Italeri DUKW Amphibious Truck. Kit number 6392. Kit graciously provided by Testors, Italeri's U.S. Importer. Suggested retail price \$35.00.

References

War Department Technical Manual TM 9-802, 2 1/2 Ton Amphibian Truck, 6 x 6, GMC DUKW-353, September 1, 1943. If you can get your hands on this, it's chock full of useful stuff. Mine is a photocopy, which is common.

The GMC A Universal Truck 6 x 6 and DUKW by Jean-Michel Boniface and Jean-Gabriel Jeudy, Haynes Publishing Group, 1990. ISBN 0 85429 860 6. Originally published in French as "Le GMC, un camion universel." Hard to find, but a great source of wartime photos and information on all the GMC variants, including the Duck.

DUKW in action, Armor number 35 by Timothy J. Kutta, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1996. ISBN 0 89747 372 8. A great and inexpensive source of photos and information on the Duck.

US Amtrac and Amphibians at War 1941-45 (7032) by Steven J. Zaloga and George Balin, Concord Publications Company, 2000. ISBN 962 361 655 4. The Steve and George show gets wet! Excellent coverage of all manner of swimmers including the Duckster.

DUKW Amphibious Truck, Allied-Axis The Photo Journal of the Second World War, Number 3, Ampersand Publishing Co., Inc., 2000. No ISBN. Our sister publication includes a comprehensive 29-page article on the Duck, featuring 8x10 photos, tech manual shots and a restored vehicle. Unfortunately, it's now out of print (hey, we tried to tell ya). Copies may still be in stock at various shops and mail order outlets.

Improving and enhancing the Italeri kit with new update sets from Trakz

Part two



SAIPAN '44 LVT A2 CONVERSION

The LVT A2 came about as a need for an armored version of the then standard LVT2 "AMTRAC." Based on the basic LVT2, the new LVT A2 was built with armored plate instead of the mild steel used on the original LVT2. The new armored front cab, with two overhead hatches for the driver and co-driver/radio operator, and a single smaller front driver's viewing hatch, were the only visible differences between the two models. A new set of add-on armor plates was also issued. These plates were mounted on the front bow, the upper hull sides above the sponsons, on the sponson sides and the hull rear face. The LVT A2 carried a variety of mounted weapons, mostly .50 & .30 caliber machine guns, but occasionally rocket racks or smoke devices, as well.

The basic Italeri kit and the Trakz update

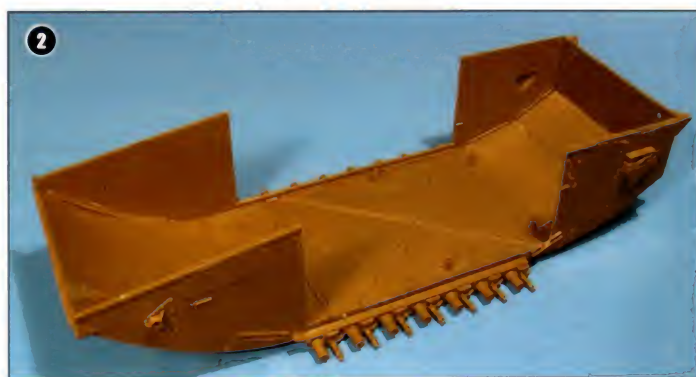
The Italeri LVT A1 is the basic kit that the Trakz LVT A2 conversion is designed to be used with. Overall, the basic components of the Italeri kit are quite useable. The lower hull, upper hull, suspension and tracks are all used with little if any modifications.

Using the well illustrated instruction sheet as a guide, my first task was to assemble the box or tub that makes up the majority of this resin conversion (**photo one**). As with any conversion kit, it is very important that you test fit the parts before gluing them together. Since this kit requires that you cut away large portions of the Italeri kit, it is wise to test fit the parts several times and mark the cut lines with a permanent felt tip pen. Remember your high school shop class, "measure twice, cut once"! After I cut away the desired areas on the Italeri hull sides, I assembled the Italeri lower hull per the kit's instructions (**photo two**). Fortunately, the necessary cuts in the hull sides are mostly hidden when the side pontoon pieces are glued onto the hull sides. Next, I glued the resin interior tub into the assembled Italeri LVT lower hull (**photo three**).

The machine gun skate rails that run along the rear wall and part of the side walls of the interior were my next task. I thought that this part of assembly might be a real pain, but it was actually a piece of cake. The trick is once you cut and bend all of the photo-etch mounting brackets, glue them to the resin rail pieces and then glue the rail pieces to the interior walls (**photo four**). The Trakz .30 and .50 caliber MGs were assembled next, along with their ammo boxes. This was easily accomplished in about 30 minutes.

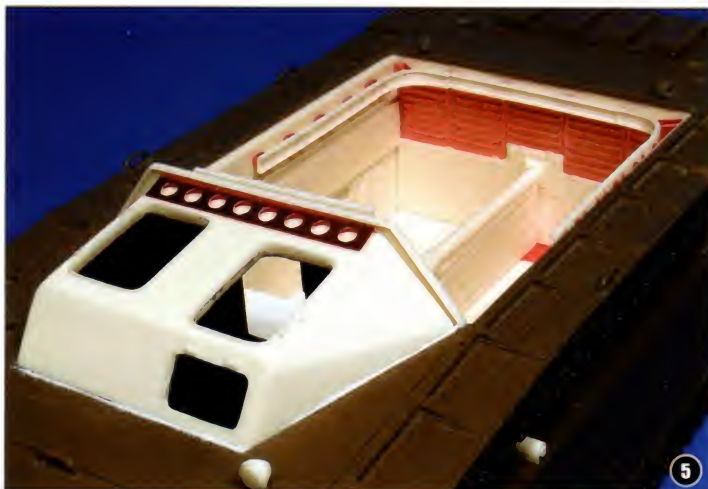
The Trakz machine gun mounts for the skate ring are just too small. While I was working on this model, I

had the opportunity to see one of these skate ring machine gun systems in person. Many of the mounts used on LVTs in the later half of WWII were field modified. The most common type was a fixed pintle mount welded to a plate that was, in turn, welded onto the skate ring rails. I made the two gunner's platforms from sheet plastic and glued them in at the proper height. I glued the Italeri upper hull piece in place and then attached the resin front cab piece as



shown in the Trakz instructions (**photo five**).

The water deflectors look harder than they turned out to be. Just take your time and test fit the pieces before gluing (**photo six**). These parts are "handed" so make sure you do not confuse the similar pieces. One of the corrections that needs to be made to the Trakz headlights is they need to be shortened. The etch light guards also need to be altered to fit the shortened headlights. The original Trakz headlights were made to replace the overly tall Italeri ones, so the pattern maker mistakenly made the new ones the same height to match the



Italeri pieces. Then, when he did the photo-etch artwork he made the light guards match. Fortunately, this is a simple thing for the modeler to fix using the finished model photos in this article.

The Trakz kit includes the early unarmored engine hatch on the photo-etch sheet, I chose to use the Italeri later armored version. I carefully removed the Italeri tow cable brackets for the rear of the hull and replaced them with the Trakz etched parts (**photo six**).

Other changes

Since I chose to model a late war version of the LVT-2 as it appeared on Saipan in 1944, a few other modifications were necessary. Trakz has also released a set of photo-etch add on armor to spice up your LVT model. I bought a set of this armor in order to use it as a template and I made the armor

sion most LVT's had one or more of these additional armor plates installed. Since the particular vehicle I was modeling did not have any of the external armor plates mounted I could not use them. However, during the Marianas campaign an interesting modification did come into wide use on many of the LVT's, including the vehicle I was building. This modification was the use of what was called "Cab Wing Armor." This was small armor plates welded at 90 degrees and mounted beside the cab sides on the front cargo compartment bulkhead wall (**photos nine and 11**).

I made these from sheet plastic and molded them up so I would have resin castings to use on future LVT models. Another late war modification that became common on many LVT's was the mounting of various types of gun shields on the two back cab mounted machine guns. The vehicle that I

was concerned with had a fairly standard type of shield. I am told that there were factory produced kits that were sent out to the units to be mounted in the field. There were also many field modification shields used. I made a shield from a small block of resin and again, I made a mold of this so I could make resin castings for future products. All of the scratch built parts that I made for this model are going to be released by TRAKZ in their LVT-2 Detail Set (**photo eight**). I added the hatch pad to the open cab hatch and the bilge pump exit pipe on the left side pontoon top. I have built several of these LVT based kits and one consistent problem has been the gap where the front upper and lower hull are supposed to meet. This can quickly be fixed with some strip plastic and putty, or by using the bow armor plate. One important tip is to install the tracks on the vehicle before you glue the upper hull to the lower hull. Otherwise, it is really difficult to get the tracks mounted. The other tip is that the drive sprocket mount is very weak, I have had to drill out the drive sprockets and super glue them to

a metal rod axle on every Italeri LVT based kit that I have built.

Painting & markings

The subject of my model is an LVT2 on Saipan in 1944 and that means that it would have been painted in the blue/gray color used on all LVT's up until 1944. First off, I gave the entire model a coat of Tamiya's light gray primer (**photo seven**). By doing this, you give all of the different mediums, resin, plastic and metal etch a common starting point for the painting and weathering process. The gray primer coat also gives you a chance to spot imperfections in your work, or areas that need a little extra attention. The blue/gray color I use is the Tamiya acrylic Medium Blue (XF-18). After allowing the paint to dry for 24 hours, I gave



9



10

the entire vehicle a wash of raw umber oil paint. The two vertical red stripes used on this vehicle represent a vehicle that landed at Saipan on Red Beach 2, with the 2nd Amtrac Battalion. I decided to paint the stripes, so I simply taped off the areas around where I wanted the markings to appear, then air-brushed the two unmasked rectangles (**photo ten**). I always base coat my models with Tamiya acrylics and then weather with oil paint and Humbrol enamel washes. I used a mars orange oil paint to represent the different rusted metal look and applied Humbrol Khaki Drill and Humbrol 148 (a flesh color) washes over the dried Mars Orange wash (**photo ten**). I repeated these washes one over the other until I achieved the desired effect. A Prisma Color PC949 "Metallic Silver" colored pencil was used to apply wear marks and scratches to the vehicle's surfaces (**photo eleven**). Using the colored pencil requires a real light hand, keeping in mind the tiny scale and random pattern that the scratches need to have to look convincing. You can really ruin a model if you don't fully develop this technique. I am presently doing the research and artwork for a set of LVT markings that will be released through Trakz in the future. Since they were not available when I built this kit, I decided to use existing dry transfers that I had in my "stash." I decorated the interior cargo compartment walls and gun shields with a few pieces of pinup art and personal photos. This was a

very common practice in and on LVT's during WWII (**photo twelve**).

Final thoughts

Overall, I am quite satisfied with the results of the finished model that can be built utilizing the Trakz and Italeri kits. I've got many more planned and you will read about them here. I am also working on a



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book that will cover modeling the whole series of WWII LVT's.

—David E. Harper with assistance by Steve Hoard

MMiR RECCE

Italeri LVT21 Amtank. Kit number 6386. Suggested retail price \$35.00.

Trakz LVT2 Conversion Set. Kit number TX0005. Suggested retail price \$46.95. Both kits graciously provided for review by the VLS Corp.

References

It's pretty much the same as last time, with one new addition.

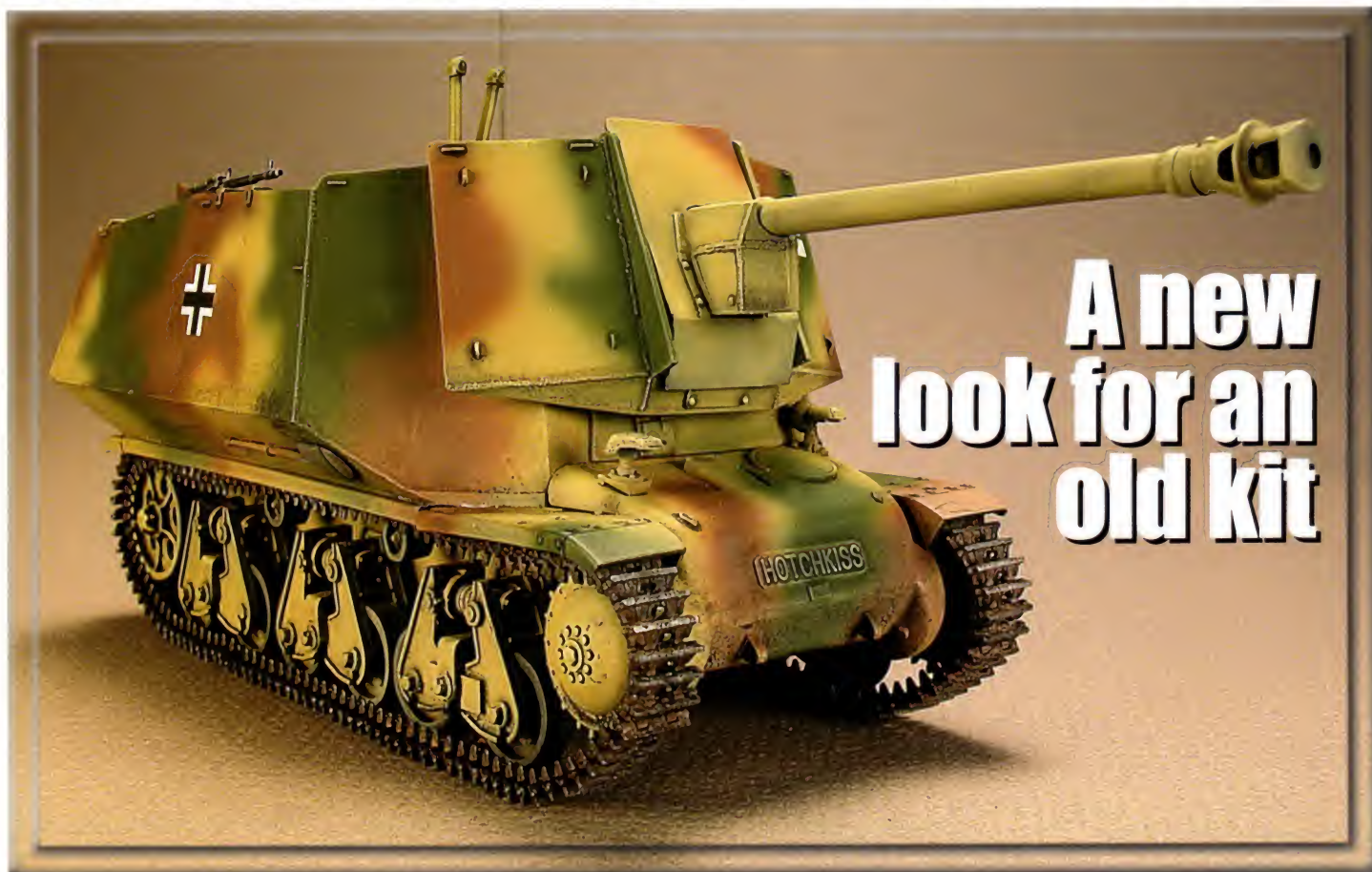
Stuart, A History of the American Light Tank, Volume 1 by R.P. Hunnicutt, Presidio Press, 1992. ISBN 0-89141-462-2.

US Amtracs and Amphibians at War 1941-45 by Steven J. Zaloga and George Balin, Concord Publications, 2000. A great general reference that is chock full of photos of all the LVT variants. ISBN 962-361-655-4.

U.S. Army Ordinance Supply Catalog Manual SNLG-241, January 1945. Not a tech manual, but rather a part catalog with tons of close-up shots of the LVT parts.

LVTs at the Front, Allied-Axis The Photo Journal of the Second World War, Number 8, Ampersand Publishing Co., Inc., 2002. No ISBN. MMR's sister publication includes a comprehensive 42-page article on all the LVTs, featuring 8x10 photos and a restored vehicle. Coincidentally, also written by a guy named Dave Harper...

Geschütz That!



**A new
look for an
old kit**

It seems as though the Germans were always trying to put tracks under their anti-tank guns. The excellent 7.5cm Pak 40 gun was the prime candidate and it was mounted on a bewildering number of tracked and semi-tracked vehicles. Some of the more interesting vehicles were those that utilized captured French tanks. There were a total of three developed during the war and they included the little Lorraine tractor, the FCM and the Hotchkiss H39. Each of these vehicles was also used to mount the 10.5cm artillery piece.

And that leads us to the subject of today's story; the P&J Designs 7.5cm Pak 40 (Sf) auf Geschützwagen 39(H). This model represents the Pak 40 plopped on the back of the French H39 light tank. It's an all resin affair and, as a major bonus, a set of ModelKasten tracks is thrown in, too. This kit has a bit of a history, as well. The master pattern was rendered by Thompson Lam, who also mastered many (if not all) of the fabulous On-Track kits. One of these kits was the 10.5cm version of this very vehicle. This kit was reviewed way back in issue 21 (coincidentally, by me) and it turned out to

be a pretty nice little model. P&J Designs is actually an off-shoot of a Hong Kong hobby shop, Chong Fung Toy House and these folks are also associated with the new plastic venture, Tri-Star.

And now, our feature presentation...

The instructions that accompany the kit are pretty comprehensive and are worlds away from those included in the On-Track kit. They have each step represented with both drawings and pictures, and the last page is a large photo of all the parts with their numbers clearly labeled. These numbers



1. These are the two different types of bogie assemblies. The one on the left, with the square reinforcing plates, is for the front. 2. Along with the ModelKasten tracks, the kit also includes a white metal drive sprocket. The



idler and the return roller are also seen here. 3. These are the completed MK tracks. They're delicate when complete!





are clearly referred to throughout the construction process. I guess the only drawback to the instructions is that they are photocopied, which makes the photos slightly less clear.

I pretty much followed the instruction sequence to the letter and I used super glue throughout. The bogies are up first and they are unique in that the backside of each has the roadwheels molded right on. This makes assembly simple, just glue the two halves together and add the rest. Each of the assemblies is composed of eight parts. Some on them are quite small, so be careful or spend some quality bench time on your hands and knees!

Like the On-Track kit, this one features a complete interior, including the transmission, drive shaft and driver's station. With very minor differ-

ences, these parts are all the same as the previous kit. It's all pretty nice stuff. All this goes into a large central hull

tub. This is a large, single resin piece and it already has a few details molded right in. This tub and the nose piece make up the lower hull.

The bogies get added at this point, too, and the only thing to watch out for here is that the bogies with the two squares get mounted on the front. The instructions indicate moving the sprocket base forward 25mm. I assume this is to make the tracks easier to fit. More on this later. I also added the remaining detail parts to the lower hull at this stage. No big whoop.

4. The lower hull has a fairly complete interior within. 5. The different colored resins were helpful in determining which parts went where. This is the rear hull. 6. A closer look at the interior. The drive train and driver's seat are visible. 7. The detail on the interior is fairly complete. This is the right side wall. 8. Ditto on the left side. Most of this can't be seen when the gun is installed. 9. The exceptionally nice radio set. This is installed on the left wall. 10. The double shield for the main gun. 11. The gun base. 12, 13. Until very recently, I'd say this was the best 7.5cm gun out there. 14. The front of the recuperator was "armored" with a small resin section.

fectly in plastic and the set includes a little jig to get them together. The finished runs are nice, but as always, they are really delicate.

Interiorly speaking

Next, I turned to the fighting compartment.

There are basically just three parts to the upper superstructure, the left and right sides and the rear. There is also the upper floor piece that is installed between the fuel tank and the ammo locker. I felt it would be better to add many of the small interior parts to the panels prior to installing them on the hull. I considered painting a few items off the model, but in the end I thought it would just make a mess. I do recommend leaving off the nicely rendered scissors scope. I installed mine, but it immediately broke off.

I installed the superstructure starting at the front. First, the driver's panel was placed, then the left and right sides. When this was properly aligned, I added the rear panel and doors. Once this was accomplished, it was just a matter of adding the remaining exterior details, like the ax, shovel and lights. The instructions have particularly good photos of the superstructure construction and the exterior details.

Gunning for trouble

Up to this point, with the exception of the ammo stowage, this kit was virtually identical to the 10.5cm version. The major diversion is the 7.5cm Pak. I was expecting trouble with the gun, but man is this thing nice. I started with the cradle and although it is loaded with detail, it's deceptively easy to build. The whole thing is only composed of about ten pieces.

There are several layers of shields on the gun and the first is constructed separately, with a few details thrown on for good measure. This is a large armored plate that appears to incorporate panels from the original Pak shield.

Next, it's the business end of the gun to attend to. Loads of great looking scratch built detail here. Close examination reveals that the gun bears only passing resemblance to either the Tamiya or Italeri kits. The remaining assembly includes the breech and its detail, the slide, recuperator and yet another shield. A very well ren-



15. Hey! Check out that sexy rear end! In spite of what I feared, there was no warping or racking in the upper hull, before or after it was added to the lower hull. The muffler is textured as you see it right from the box. 16. The completed interior from the left side. Getting the gun shoe-horned in there was a trick. However, aligning the rear of the slide with the travel lock was the solution. The spare rounds are from the older Aires set for the StuG. This makes them a bit too short. 17. The gun from the right. The tunnel for the drive shaft can clearly be seen at the bottom of the photo. Good thing it's there! I added some red dials to the radio, but this is just for fun—it's not accurate. Note the scissors periscope at the top right corner. 18. These are 7.5cm ammo canisters from MR Models. They are also for a StuG and are cast in white metal, which allows them to be realistically scratched after painting.



dered armor cover is also installed on the outer side of the shield.

The instructions recommend (and I completely concur) leaving the gun mount, shield and gun out of the vehicle until after painting. There are a lot of nooks and crannies in there, so this is good advice.

So, along with those three pieces, I had the finished hull and the tracks, and I was ready to paint.

And so...

As is my habit, the model was sprayed overall with Tamiya Black, then covered with a uniform coat of Tamiya Dark Yellow (XF-60), leaving a few areas dark to simulate shadow. A camo scheme made up of Tamiya Red Brown (XF-64)

and Olive Green (XF-58) followed this. For large broad areas, I sometimes prefer the XF-58 over its recommended and darker counterpart, XF-61. It's a bit more vivid, but once weathered it's still appropriately subdued.

After base painting I did my imitation of a con-tortionist and painted all the various details inside the vehicle, like the radio, and the MG ammo car-tridges and boxes. The ammo items were painted dark green and the radio face was painted in field gray. The dials and knobs were picked out in silver, white and red. Other exterior details were also painted at this time.

Markings appear to have been pretty scarce on these vehicles, so I added a single cross to the center of each hull side from an Archer sheet. No decals are included in the kit.

Weathering was accomplished with the stan-dard oil wash, followed by drybrushing with lighter shades of all three colors.

The tracks were painted with Tamiya Metallic Grey (XF-56) and washed with dark brown pastels mixed with Tamiya thinner. This works well, as long as you wait at least one or two days for the base coat of paint to dry. Once this was accom-plished, the tracks were drybrushed with Vallejo Silver Plate.

Bringing the room down

I screwed up on the upper hull. Plain and simple. I should have test fit the tracks with the hull prior to closing up the top and bottom. The instructions plain-ly warn of this. I was eventually forced to carve away substantial portions of the fender bottoms to get the tracks on. I also removed several of the drive sprocket teeth to clear the way. Fortunately, this is not noticeable on the finished model. In the end, it

worked out OK, the only major casualty being the fit of the forward fenders. Oh well...


Final assembly involved installing the gun mount, then the large shield. Both of these were glued in place. I wasn't exactly sure where the cradle should sit, so I placed it onto the mount, then carefully slid the gun assembly into the cradle until it snapped in place. This then allows adjust-ment of the cradle until it aligns with the gun travel lock. Beautiful!

The interior looked kind of naked to me, so I dug a Tamiya tank MG out of the spares box for the mount supplied in the kit. I also used 7.5cm rounds from an older Aires set for the StuG. These are a lit-tle short for the Pak, but they look good. I especial-ly liked the choice of rounds and empty shells. Plus, the set supplies etched brass base plates. I put four rounds behind the gun to represent ready rounds and three empty cases on the right side. I also ran across a MR Models set that contained metal case

for 7.5cm round. These were painted dark green and put on top of the fuel tank. There are other 7.5cm ammo sets out there that are more accurate for the Pak 40 (like the VP set). I only used the StuG set because I had it on hand.

OK, let's go

Well, that's it. This was a pretty nice kit and not a terribly difficult build. This might not be the candi-date for your first resin model, but those who have some experience with the medium should have no problems—as long as you watch out for the hull and tracks! There are plenty of additional detailing opportunities. The ammo locker on the right could be scratchbuilt open, you could add a tow cable or chain, or the radio and comm system could be rigged and wired.

The price is steep, but is generally in line with kits of this type. Mission accomplished! 

—Pat Stansell

MMiR RECCE

P&J Design 7.5cm Pak 40 (Sf) auf Geschutzwagen 39(H). Kit number P-001. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price approximately \$130.00.

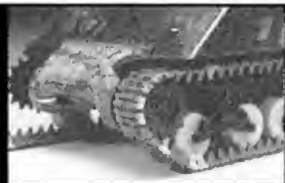
References

There's not a whole lot out there, but here's what I found.

Beute-Kraftfahrzeuge und-Panzer der deutschen Wehrmacht by Walter J. Spielberger, Band 12 der Serie Militärfahrzeuge, Motor Buch Verlag, 1992. ISBN 3-613-01255-3. This is a German language title covering all the foreign AFVs used and modified by the German army in WW2. Hard to find.

Panzers at Saumur No. 3, Dai Nippon Kaiga, 1992. ISBN 4-499-20597-2. Although it does not cover this specific vehicle, there are great photos of the 10.5cm version and photos of the 7.5cm gun installed in the Lorraine tractor. Still in print, too.

Panzer Tracts No. 10 Artillerie Selbstfahrlafetten by Thomas L. Jentz and Hilary Doyle, Panzer Tracts, 2002. ISBN 0-9708407-5-6. Again, no coverage of the 7.5cm version, but interesting information and photos of the 10.5cm vehicle. This publication also includes 1/35th-scale plans of that vehicle.



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Comrade farmer and his big gun

Building
a Russian
203mm
Howitzer and
S-65 tractor



Talk about an odd pair. These two critters seem totally incompatible. But when all you have is a big old tractor to pull a big old gun, it works. Both of the kits are from two different model companies, but oddly enough, both are from Ploesti, Romania. They proved to be a challenge, but I think you will find them an unusual and interesting subject.

Starting with the big gun

The 203mm Howitzer is one of the more interesting looking artillery pieces ever produced. With its tracked carriage, it looks more like a throw back to the large artillery that was fielded during World War One. The Soviet designers, F.F. Lendyer, N.I. Magdassiev and A.G. Gavrillov developed the Model 1931 (B-4) 203mm Howitzer in the "Bolshevik" factory in Leningrad in 1931. Model 1931 and built in 1931... Coincidence? I think not! Anyway, during World War II the B-4 proved itself in actions against heavily fortified targets and artillery positions and was used both in an indirect and direct fire mode. I am sure most of you have seen the footage of these monsters being fired in the streets of Berlin at buildings, probably ruining some poor old Volksstrum's day.

The tracked howitzer was equipped with a limber to enable it to be towed by a tractor with a maximum speed of about 15 kph. Caterpillar tracks were used to provide the howitzer with a degree of mobility. However, it was not intended to be self-propelled.

The B-4 had a rate of fire of one round every minute for a well trained, and I would guess very strong, crew and used a two-part cartridge. The maximum range of the weapon was 18 kilometers. This gun played an important role during break-through at Leningrad, the battles for Sevastopol, and assaults on Königsberg.

The gun weighed in at a whopping 17.7 tons in its firing position and 19 tons in its transport mode. For long distance movement, the five-ton barrel was removed and moved on a separate trailer. If you are



like me, you probably wondered what the two reels on the front of the gun are for. Apparently, they were used to aid in removing the barrel. There were a number of variants built over the years, but there does not seem to be very much photographic evidence of the differences.

We in the US are lucky, in that we have the only B-4 outside of Russia. Ours came to us courtesy of the Germans who had captured it from the Russians. We kindly relieved them of it after the war. The Germans, who also have always had a thing for big guns, captured a number of them from the Russians. It is thought that this gun was part of the organic artillery battalion of the 352nd Infantry Division, which fought in the Normandy battles. This unit was also known to have used 152mm Russian howitzers.

A Miniatur production (sounds like an Italian movie company)

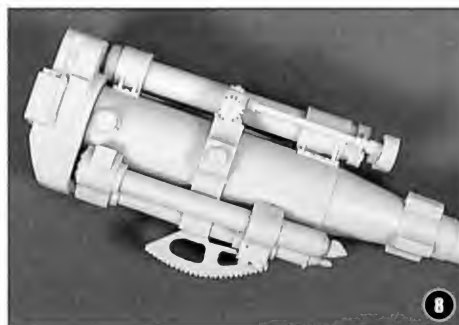
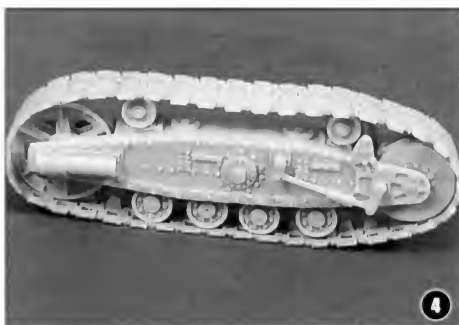
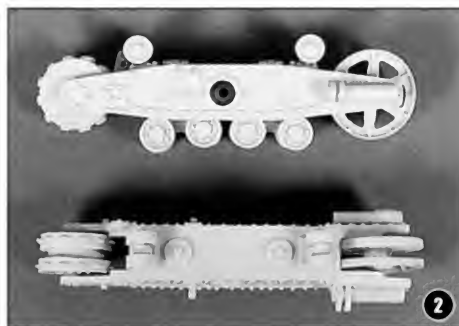
This is the first Miniatur Models kit I have built. The kit is 100% resin with around 104 parts. The casting is not outstanding. There are a few holes and some of the castings had mismatched molds, so there were very pronounced raised ridges that had to be removed. The biggest problem was that there were several missing pieces, including one of the correct sponsons. I was however, impressed with the main frame, which was molded with all the rivets on all four sides, including inside the frame. The instructions are pretty sketchy, with some rather simple exploded views, plus some

large letters, including X, V and W, with no explanation of their meaning.

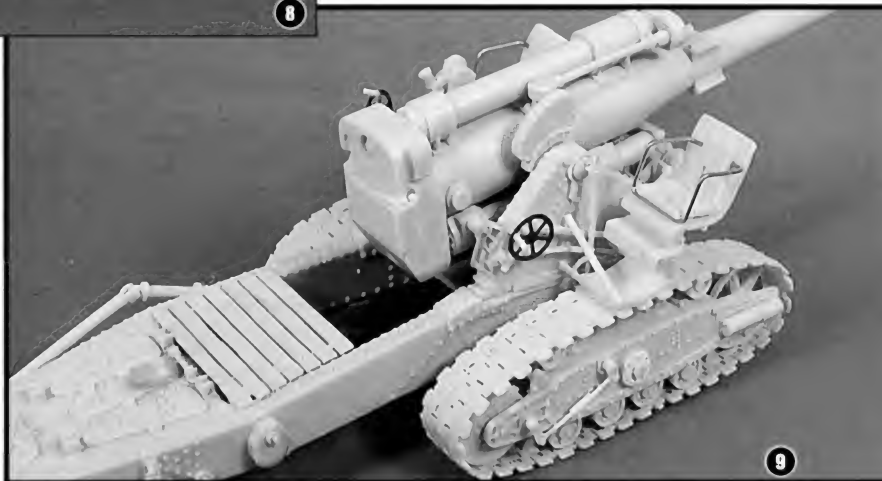
Filling holes and building sponsons

The sponsons looked like a good place to get started, so I cleaned up the two main frames. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, my kit only included two copies of the same sponson. There are supposed to be mirror units. I was, therefore, forced to modify one side. Luckily, this was not as hard as I first thought. I had to saw off the two screw assemblies on the sides and switch them. I also had to fill the hole for the main axle with a piece of sheet styrene and put some rivets on it. I made these rivets with a Historex punch and die set. There were a few other small pieces that needed to be switched but otherwise the finished conversion did not look too bad. One thing I did not discover until I was dry mounting the parts was that the mounting points are not centered. I had to move the mounting point on the modified one back about 1/4."

The next small problem was the bogies, which go in each sponson. They sit too high, so I had to cut them down to move them up into the sponsons. The drive sprockets and idlers were cleaned up and then glued on to the sponsons, along with the return rollers on the top. The tracks, which are lengths only, are not great but I cleaned them up the best I could. I then glued the four lengths of track together for each side. I laid the track (centered) over the top return rollers and used a hair dryer to heat the ends so they would bend around.



1. The bogie sets for the sponsons had to be shortened because they caused the sponson to sit too high. Notice the top piece has been removed on the right bogie. 2. The two sponsons went together rather easily, until I realized I had two left ones and not one for each side. 3. This is the modified bogie with the hole covered that the axle is supposed to go through. 4. The tracks consist of four equal length sections that I first glued together, then using a hair dryer, got to fit around the bottom. 5. The limber for the gun was easy to construct. The details on the wheels were outstanding. 6. The main frame was also well cast, but had a bunch of air bubbles on the inside. The boom arm, which is used to load the rounds, is in the travel mode alongside the frame. 7. The rear spade was a lot of fun to get on. Notice the small and very delicate connecting piece that goes to the brass wire ring. 8. The barrel assembly completed. Watch out for the rear piece on the bottom just in front of the breech. I forgot to put that on before putting the three tubes in. 9. The seats have armrests that need to be made out of brass wire. The wire was not furnished in the kit. Also, there are three hand wheels, all of which were not useable. I used some from an M-59 Long Tom Eduard photo-etch set.



If I had not shortened the bogie wheels, I probably would have had just enough track. But since I did I had to remove one link on each side. I did cheat and cut off the teeth on the drive sprocket, otherwise the tracks would not fit on them.

Keeping it limber

I decided to build the limber next, since I would need to get the correct height of the trail. I cleaned up all the pieces then stuck the two bolts in the main axle and the two tie rods, but did not glue them to leave them flexible. I then glued the two wheels on and adjusted them so everything was square.

Now for the big barrel

The main frame was cleaned up and the pour plug was removed from the front. The inside of the rear of the frame was an air hole field, which I filled using sev-

eral coats of Mr. Surfacor 500. This part, for some reason, had a heavy mold release powder on it, so I had to thoroughly scrub it to get it off.

I then glued the end piece that hooks to the limber. The spade was then cleaned up, which included removing a pour plug. There are supposed to be two small eyelets on the spade, but mine were gone. I made new ones from brass wire. The spade is tricky because you have two very delicate connecting pieces and two heavier bars. These all have to line up at the same time before gluing.

The boom was then cleaned up and glued on. There are two small turn cranks that go on it, but both of mine were broken. Again, I made a new one out of brass wire. The holes for the axle were drilled out and the axle was then glued in.

The barrel was then assembled by first cleaning up the front piece of the barrel and gluing it to the rear

barrel section. The breech was now glued on before adding the forward tubes. The top recuperator tube was glued on and the odd pieces were then added to it. The bottom assembly was next, but be careful here and be sure to put the rear mount piece on before gluing the twin tubes and center tube on. I didn't and had to remove the breech to get it on—bummer.

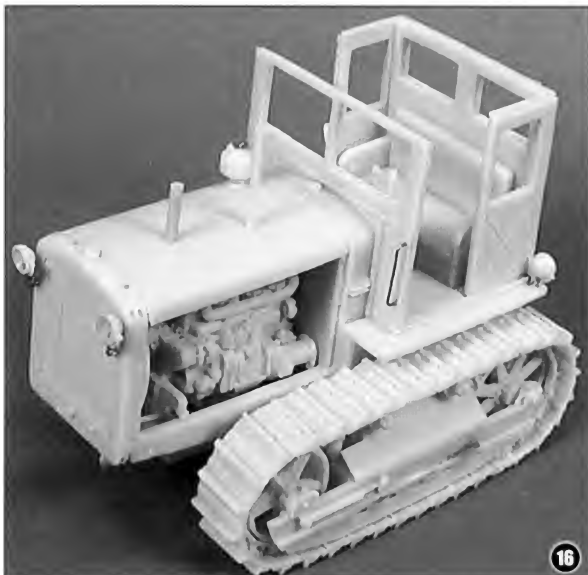
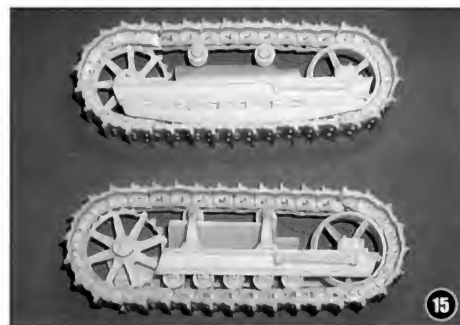
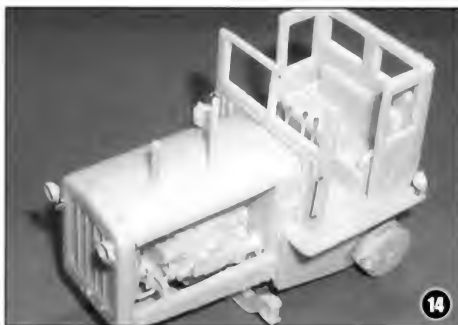
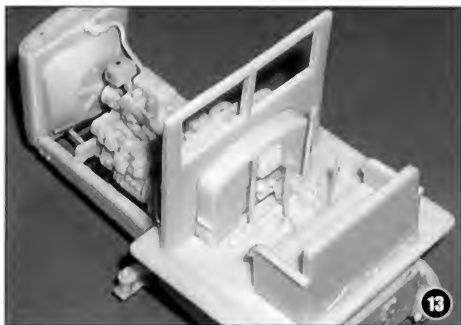
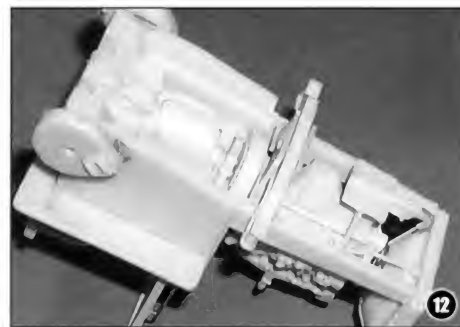
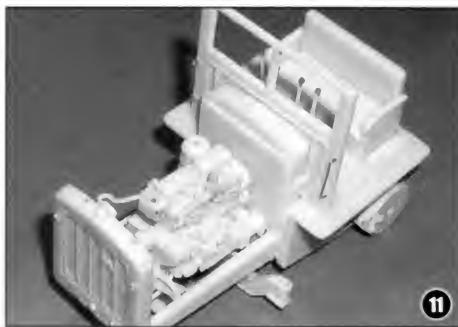
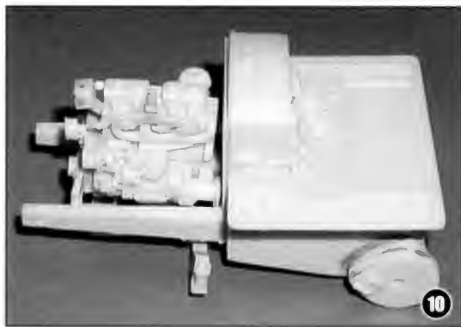
The gun mount was cleaned up and glued to the main frame. The various pieces were attached to both sides, including the two brake levers. The sponsons were then glued on and the barrel added. Last, the

seats were cleaned up and glued on. You need to make the armrests out of wire, which is not provided. Unfortunately, the three hand wheels were all badly cast and not useable. I happened to have a photo-etch set left over from a M59 Long Tom, which had three hand wheels.

A wooden platform, which comes in two pieces, was included in the kit, so I used it. I did find several photos of these being used. Apparently, the crew stood on them when loading the gun.

Painting the gun

I now washed the gun in warm soapy water and then sprayed it with a base coat of Tamiya XF-1 flat black. After filling in a few more holes I had missed, I sprayed the gun and limber with Tamiya XF-27 black green. To lighten the gun, I lightly sprayed the upper surfaces with a mix of Tamiya XF-61 dark green and XF-60 desert yellow.



10. The tractor engine has been assembled, then mounted to the tractor frame. The engine is quite well detailed, which is good since it shows. 11. The radiator has the factory name on it. The brass wire handles were shown in the instructions, but you have to furnish the wire. 12. The mount for the engine has two identical pieces on either side. The forward one can be glued on first, but the one to the rear needs to stay off until after the engine is mounted. 13. The details for the driver's compartment can be seen. Unfortunately, one of my missing pieces from the kit was one of the pedals. 14. The engine hood was glued on, then the headlights were all mounted, using brass wire for support. Wire soldering was used for all the lights. The arm sticking out of the side on the bottom had to be altered to allow the tractor to ride level. I cut off about 1/4" from the bottom and this seemed to fix the problem. 15. The two completed sponsons. The track was very easy since the end pieces were pre-shaped to "U"s. 16. The sponsons were glued on after altering the piece I mentioned. Trust me, you will have to do this.

types of tractors were captured and used for a variety of uses including recovery and construction projects. Sadly, none has survived, mainly because once the war was over the 34,235 that were left were turned over to the collective farms and used until they fell apart.

The biggest visual difference between the S-60 and S-65 was the S-60 had an X-shape support in front of the radiator and a large gas external fuel drum on the left side of the vehicle. The S-65 often had a cab to protect the driver from the elements, but not bullets since there was no armor protection. The engine compartment had two side panels, but these were often removed to allow better ventilation of the engine.

The primary purpose of the S-60 and S-65 was to tow artillery. However, they were often put to work doing normal tractor stuff, like towing trailers.

The Wespe kit

This kit is all resin except for a piece of clear acetate for the windows. The kit includes approximately 76 parts, which for the most part, are well cast. There are a few holes and unfortunately, two missing parts. The instructions are a little weak and consist of a few exploded drawings and a short blurb about the tractor. Oddly enough, some of the parts have letters on their sprues, but none are mentioned in the instructions. There are no painting instructions and, of course, no markings. The neatest part is the radiator, which has the Cyrillic words on the top front for STALINET and ChTZ on the lower part.

One big honking engine

I started with the engine, which is well cast and has a number of smaller parts to glue on. The wiring is already cast on, so I couldn't add anything extra there.

I found there is a definite order of putting the engine parts together. There are two identical supports underneath the engine mount. Do not glue the rear one on until the engine is glued on. I then glued the radiator on. There are two connecting hoses that run from the top and bottom, which I then glued on. You could try gluing them on first, but I took a chance and waited until the engine was in and I think it was easier. It is important to be sure all the holes for the hoses are predrilled before attaching the radiator.

I then glued the engine cover on, followed by the cab front. There are two handles on either side of the cab that I made out of brass wire. The cab interior parts were then added. Unfortunately, one of the missing parts was one of the two pedals. I made a second one out of styrene and glued it on. All the shifts and levers were then glued on. The rear cab section was then glued on after the seat was added, but I left the top off until after painting the interior.

And now a word from our sponsons

The two sponsons were then started. There is a skirt that goes on each of the main rollers. Unfortunately, once again, my kit had two of the same side and not what should have been a mirror piece (maybe these guys know each other). I finally decided the easiest solution was to cut off the bottom pieces and reverse the skirt. The return rollers were glued on the top and the angle piece was cleaned up and glued on. There are supposed to be two supports underneath these angled pieces, but I could not see a reason to bother with them, since they would not be seen when complete. The drive sprockets and idlers were cleaned up. For the drive sprockets this was not an easy task, because the pour plug that surrounds them was difficult to remove without damaging the teeth.

The track pieces are a little unusual, since the end pieces are already formed for the wheels. There is a

low. The tracks were then painted with Vallejo orange brown and the limber tires with black gray. The seat covers were painted dark green and the wooden palette was first painted tan and then wood stain.

I then gave everything a wash of a very thin coat of black oil paint. The tracks were given an additional wash of black/burnt umber oil. I then dry brushed with titanium white, sap green and yellow ochre oil paint. The tracks and a few other places were dry brushed with Rub n' Buff silver.

Moving to the tractor

The Stalinets S-60 and S-65 were direct descendants of the early American Holt Caterpillar design and were produced in the Chelyabinskiy Traktorniy Zavod-Chelyabinsk Traktor Plant, abbreviated "ChTZ." The Soviets actually inherited the Hолts from the Tsarist government who had purchased Holt tractors from the US and copied them during the First World War. The S-60 was produced in very large numbers with some 68,997 being built between 1932 and 1937. Production then switched to a diesel version called the S-65, the successor to the S-60, and this was produced between 1937 and 1941 with over 37,626 being built.

During the Winter War with Finland and later during Operation Barbarossa, a large number of both

difference between the two end pieces so watch out. The small diameter is for the idler. I glued the two straight pieces of track to the idler piece, then slid it on. I then glued the drive sprocket to its mount on the sponson and glued on the rear end of the track.

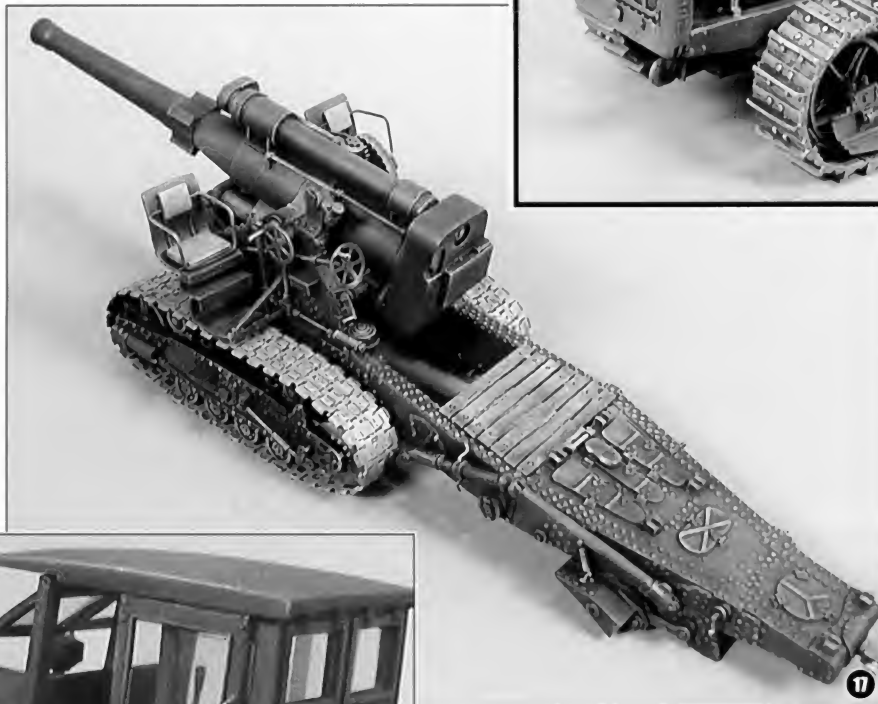
When I checked the fit of the sponsons, I noticed that they did not sit right on the chassis. If you mount them without modification, the whole chassis leans back at an alarming angle. It kind of looks like it is drag race time at the Collective Farm 500. To correct this, I cut off the bottom of the forward springs to lower the front of the chassis, which was an easy way to fix this problem.

I added the four lights, two to the front and two to the rear. I used brass wire for the mounts, since the cast-on mounts were too weak. I also added solder to all the lights to simulate electrical wiring.

Lets paint this guy, too

After a good wash, I sprayed the tractor with Tamiya XF-1 flat black. I then lightly sprayed it with Tamiya XF-58 olive green. I have no idea what color the Soviets actually used, but this looked like as good a color as any. For the first step of weathering, I lightly sprayed the upper surfaces

17. The completed gun. I only lightly weathered the gun using oil paints. The wooden platform on the rear of the gun was used by the crew during reloading operations and was left on for transport. I first painted it with a light tan, then Vallejo wood grain paint. 18. The completed tractor. The MV lenses helped a lot and I guess you



are supposed to use something like them, since the kit's headlights were hollow. 19. A view from the other side of the vignette. Notice the MV lenses on the rear of the tractor. The cool dude is from Warriors and was painted with oils for the face and hands, and Vallejo paints for the uniform.

Warriors Russian Tanker in Winter Dress. He is wearing a big heavy coat, which I like, but I doubt he is a tanker, since there is no way he could get in a tank with that coat. Anyway, I painted his face and hands with oil paints and Vallejo was used on his uniform.



that was cut with a hot wire tool. I then covered it with a mixture of tile grout, Celluclay and Woodland Scenics earth undercoat for color. I mixed in kitty litter and some small rocks. Once dry, I gave it a wash of burnt umber acrylic paint, then dry brushed with white and yellow ochre oil paints. I sprinkled a little static grass around after putting some thinned white glue on the base. The edge of the base was painted with black acrylic paint. You need to be careful with styrofoam because any oil based paints will melt it.

For a figure, I used a

My conclusions

Although I love the B-4, this kit was not great. I built the MB Models kit of this gun several years ago and only remember the terrible pour plugs on it. This kit does not have that problem, but the casting is fairly poor in a number of places and the missing parts did not help. The only other kit of this gun that I am aware of in 1/35 scale is a Pit-Roads white metal kit, but I have not seen it. The neatest part of this kit is the limber, which is not included in the MB Models kit, since this allows me to attach it to a tractor.

As far as the tractor goes, I have never built one before, so this was an interesting challenge. The kit was not too bad for resin, although the casting was only fair. The track molds are showing wear since there were some missing pieces, which resulted in excessive resin to remove. The only other problem was getting the front end to sit down, which was really not very difficult.

—Jim Hensley

with a very thin mix of Tamiya XF-61 dark green and XF-60 desert yellow. I painted the seat covers and other small items with Vallejo paints. The tracks and exhaust stack were painted with Polly Scale rust. I then gave it a wash of very thin black oil paint. The tracks and sponsons were given a second wash of black/burnt umber oil paint. Afterwards, I dry brushed with titanium white, sap green and burnt umber oil paints. The tracks were dry brushed with Rub'n'Buff silver.

The final stage was to glue the clear acetate windows supplied with the kit and add the MV L166 clear lenses to all four lights.

Putting it all together

The base was constructed out of 1" sheet styrofoam

MMiR RECCE

Miniatur Models BM-4 Russian 203mm Heavy Howitzer. Kit number MIM 35009. Suggested U.S. retail price \$120.95.

Wespe Models Stalinetz-S65. Kit number WES 007. Suggested U.S. retail price \$130.95.

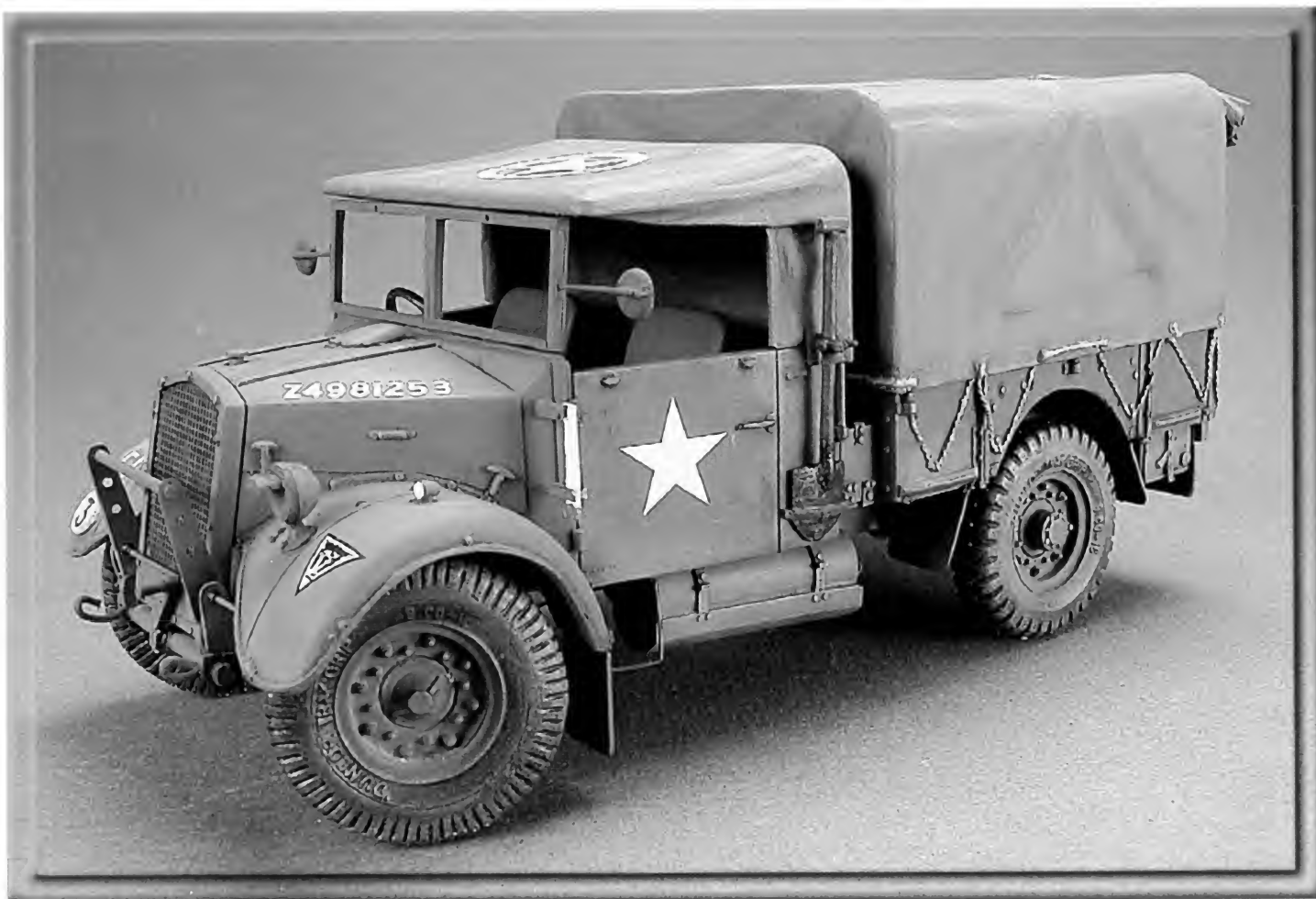
Warriors Russian Tanker Winter Dress. Kit number 35261. Suggested U.S. retail price \$12.98.

References

Vollert, Jochen. *STALINETZ S-60/S-65 Artillery Tractors*. The Tankograd Gazette, Number 10 – October 2000, Trogen, Germany. This is a must have reference for this tractor since it has a great line drawing and detailed history, plus photos.
Fedrowitz, Michael. *Soviet Field Artillery in World War II*, Schiffer, Pennsylvania, 1996. There are several good photos and a short history of the B-4.
Vollert, Jochen. *The Soviet 203mm Howitzer B-4 Model 1931*, The Military Machine, Nr 2, 1997. The best source I have found on this gun. There are a lot of great photos here.

Ford Truck Man

BUILDING THE FORD WOT2 TRUCK



The Ford WOT2 vehicle was introduced in the 1930's and remained in production throughout the Second World War. Ford Motor Company Ltd. of Dagenham produced many of the trucks and eventually about 60,000 vehicles were produced. As the war progressed, various changes and improvements were made and different body styles were fitted.

Initially, models had open cabs with partial windscreens and little weather protection for the crews. There was little crew comfort and no tilts were provided. Eventually, they evolved into full width windscreens and full canvas cabs with hoops and tarpaulins. The cab was equipped with snap-in Perspex side windows and the windscreens could tilt out. Bodies were designed for carrying troops, general service, light machinery, wireless, fire service and a few house-types. The truck model designations comprised of letters from A to H and displayed differences in body type, radiator grille and type of windscreen.

The vehicles were powered by a Ford V8-liquid cooled petrol engine and had four forward and one reverse gear. The suspension in the front was transverse semi-elliptic with hydraulic shock absorbers

while the rear was semi-elliptic with hydraulic shocks. These 4X2 trucks were in the 15-cwt class and sported 9.00 X 16 tires with a 23 gallon fuel tank giving around 250 miles radius of operation. Early vehicles were powered with a six-volt electrical system, which was changed to 12 volts as the vehicle evolved. The vehicles were uncomfortable to drive due to the tunnel area for the driver's legs and the closeness of the control pedals. The trucks were roughly 14' 6" long, 6' 4" wide and 7' 4" high.

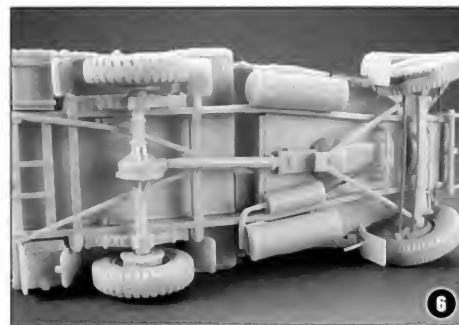
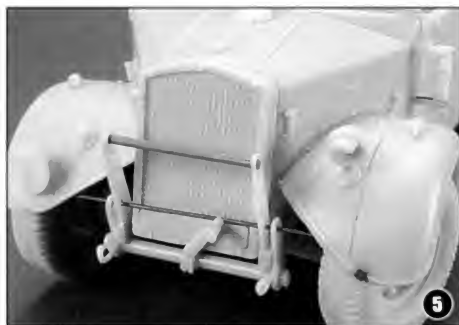
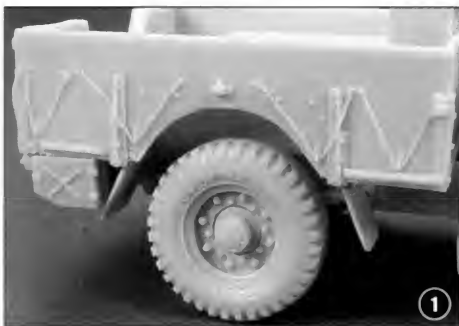
The resin kit came in a stout box, with all the resin parts well protected. Wire and styrene rod was provided for fittings and a piece of clear acetate was included for the windshield. The instructions were of the exploded diagram type, with all the parts numbered and broken lines showed the locations for attachment. The two diagrams were clear and the location of parts was easy to discern. No decals or marking details were provided.

The kit was first cleaned up with a sharp blade and file. There were some parts that had extra resin blobs and these were easily removed. A few parts suffered from mold tears resulting in offset castings and large seams had to be filled or sanded off. This occurred on two tires, driver's levers and

parts of the exhaust system. There were a few large resin plugs that needed to be cut off and sanded down. The kit was designed for easy assembly and there were fewer than sixty parts in total. Parts were test fitted and adjusted before cyanoacrylate glue was applied for permanent attachment.

Chassis

Assembly began with the chassis. Roy provided a large assembly with a partial engine molded on the underside and rear springs molded in position. This main frame consisted of the chassis rails and cross members. The exhaust system consisted of the exhaust manifold, muffler and tailpipe. The two shock absorbers were added to the rear, then the front and rear bumpers were glued into position. The front axle was fitted into its slot and the sway bar was added. The drive shaft with universal joints, as shown in the instructions, was missing. Styrene rod was inserted in its place. The rear axle had a large bubble hole at the point where the wheel attaches, so this was cut off. A piece of resin of about the same size was inserted and the assembly was drilled and pinned with wire to provide a strong attachment point. This was necessary for the wheel to bear the weight of the resin van. The



1. The ropes and hooks were delicately molded to the cargo body. Angle supports, bolts and rivets were crisp without bubbles. 2. The front wheels were angled to the right. Note the bonnet clamps, hinges, door handle and Dunlop tires. 3. The cargo bed showing the wheel boxes and spare wheel holder. The bed was made of steel with a wooden rear door. 4. The cab interior with the driver's dashboard and controls. The battery box is visible between the front seats. Note the pin for the gear change lever. 5. The brush guards, towing hooks, fenders support and crank handle. The radiator has a nice mesh pat-

tern with the correct rivets and bolts visible. 6. An underside view showing the frame and suspension units. The exhaust system exits behind the protected fuel tank. 7. The rear cargo bed door. Note the angle iron supports with their bolt detail. The wood grain is well depicted. The cutouts in the rear door were footholds for easy entry into the cargo area. 8. The cab cover in position with the well molded wrinkles and fabric texture. 9. A view of the odd adhesive tape patch on the top of the tilt. This was probably an error during molding and hopefully only occurred on this kit.

petrol tanks required some sanding due to torn molds. They were molded with their protective lower pans and securing straps. They were positioned and glued to the chassis.

Two different tire patterns were provided on the four wheels and the front wheels were positioned at an angle. The tie rod was cut to fit the attaching points and then glued. The tires have the size and manufacturer molded on the sidewalls in raised letters.

Cab

The cab was assembled next and was easy and straightforward. The seats were attached to the blocks on the floor of the cab and the battery box was positioned between them. The gearshift lever was made from the common pin provided and looked great. This was a good idea and could be used on other kits as well. The pin had a head of about twice the height of a normal common pin so it was perfect. The handbrake lever was glued at an angle to the floor. The driver's pedals were molded in position and all that had to be added was the steering column and steering wheel. The dashboard was added at the front between the two crew positions. Gauges and knobs were detailed in resin but extra

detail could be added, depending on how much detail one wished to add. The addition of the cab's tarp hides a lot of the detail. Some resin blobs obscured the tunnel for the passenger's feet and this was easily removed with a drill and cutting bit. There was no detail on the inside of the doors so straps or handles could be added depending on references. The windshield was positioned at a slight angle and fixed in position. After painting the clear acetate sheet was cut and the panes positioned and secured with white glue. The rear view mirrors were left off until the vehicle was completed. Holes were provided for wipers but none were provided in the kit. References showed a small canvas fringe that hangs down over the windshield.

The front grille was well detailed and was added next. The crank handle was positioned up and glued in location. One hooded driving light was located on the left fender and the bridge disc was secured on to the other fender. The engine hood T clamp tie-downs were nicely molded on the sides. The turn signal indicator was added on the driver's side and a positioning clip was made from a soda can for the lower tip. A spade with well detailed locking clip and a pick handle was provided for either side of the cab. These were painted

separately and added after the vehicle was almost completed.

A nicely detailed cab cover with wrinkles and seams was provided.

Cargo body

The steel cargo body was very well detailed with tarpaulin securing ropes, rivet and bolt detail and strengthening supports. The ropes for the tarpaulin were finely cast and the securing hooks and tied knots were very discernable. The tailgate was of wood and the wood grain was well detailed both inside and out on the resin representation. Hinges and lock details were well detailed. The tailgate was cast with the tray so it would have to be cut, if it were to be shown opened. The spare tire sits in a holder in the center of the rear tray.

The steel chassis had two raised wood bearers and these were well detailed with the wood pattern on them. The cargo tray or bed was then attached to the chassis.

Tilt

Some resin plugs were cut off from the tilt and the remains were sanded smooth. The interior of the tarpaulin tilt was well detailed with hoops and



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transverse supports. A few globs of resin were removed from the inside and the spots were sanded. The outside of the tilt had what appeared to be a piece of scotch tape imbedded in the resin and it could not be removed. We suspect the mold tore or perforated at this point and was patched with the tape. Unfortunately it bonded very well to the resin. Or perhaps the tape was deliberate and represented a large patch for a torn canvas tilt. Whatever the reason, this feature had to be carefully sanded off and blended to match the surrounding area of the tilt. Hopefully, this only occurred on this casting, if it were a patch for the



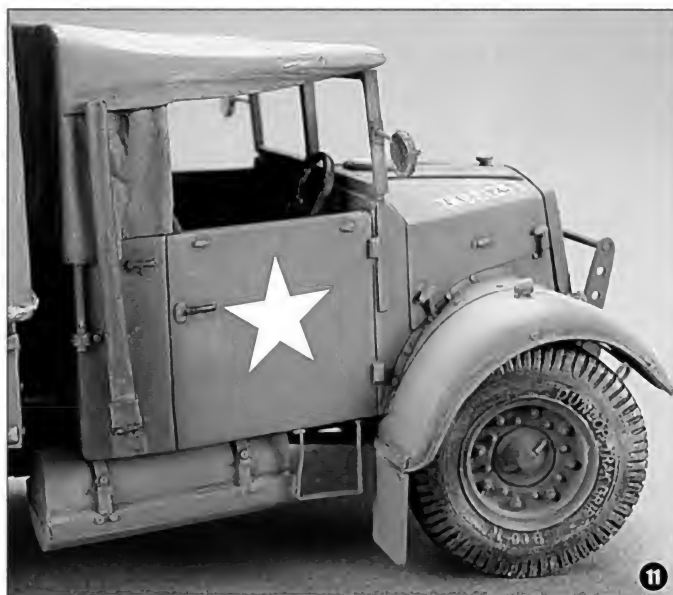
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torn mold. A separate piece of rolled up tarp with straps was provided for the rear curtain. This was secured to the rear and the resulting spaces filled with white glue. Ropes were detailed on the lower edge of the tilt as they passed through the grommets and were secured on the cargo body hooks.

Underside

The mud flaps were positioned at an angle to the chassis and secured in place. The underside lockers were then fitted in position behind the rear wheels and glued. They were nicely detailed with locks. The taillight and license plate completed the underside detailing.

Final assembly was the addition of the cab to the chassis. The underside of the cab had two positioning rails, so the cab was easily positioned and secured in place. The front brush guard was made up of four angled brackets and two horizontal rods. After consulting references, the large angled brackets were secured to the chassis nearest the engine grille. Styrene rod was fitted to the top holes



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and it was cut and secured. The two smaller brackets were positioned to the outside and secured to the chassis. The wire rod provided was then threaded through the lower four holes and secured at the ends on the fender wings. The attachment points were provided at the outer tips of the fenders and the securing bolt heads were molded on. Two towing hooks were molded in resin. They were small and required careful handling and a little clean up. They were secured in position on the forward ends of the chassis.

The toolbox was added between the cab and the tray. Copper wire was provided for steps but strips were cut from a soda can and formed and twisted to fashion new flat steps, which were commonly seen on these vehicles.

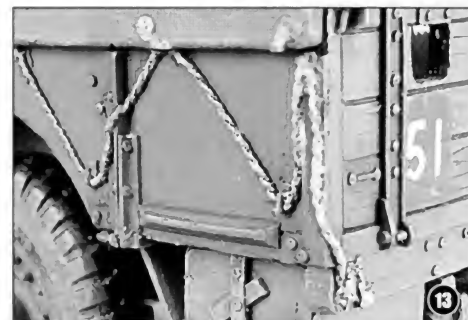
Painting and markings

The vehicle was painted with Humbrol paints and sealed with Testors Dullcote from the can. The tires were painted black and then given a wash of brown. After drying for a few days a light wash was applied with sepia color oil paint and thinners. All the raised objects now had shadows and a light dry brushing would show them up even more. The dry brush color consisted of light ochre oil paint, mixed with the Humbrol base coat #160. The cab and cargo tilt was painted with Humbrol Super 150. Straps and ropes were detailed with a fine brush and a contrasting color of paint. All the rub-on decals came from Archer Fine Transfers. Decals were added to depict a vehicle from the 22nd Dragoon Regiment, 30th Armoured Brigade, 79th Armoured Division. I preferred these types of stars and numbers, as they were easy to apply and never require a gloss coat like the water slide types. A light dusting with earth colored pastels completed the job. One note to remember is that Humbrol paints have changed over the years and often color numbers do not

10. Decals were added to depict a vehicle from the 22nd Dragoon Regiment, 30th Armoured Brigade, 79th Armoured Division. 11. The right side of the cab. All the rub-on decals came from Archer Fine Transfers. I prefer these, as they were easy to apply and never require a gloss coat like the water slide types. 12. Ammunition boxes from the spares box were added last. 13. The molded-on rope detail complements the finished model nicely.

match. So, after construction, use the color you think is best and after weathering and pastels nobody will know the exact shade used, especially on vehicles exposed to harsh weather

and dust. The turn indicator was painted white with a red tip. White paint was also used to add an oval to the rear differential for blackout convoy conditions. When the painting was concluded, rear view mirrors were attached to the windshield frame. Discs were punched out from a Mylar candy wrapper (Winnie-the-Pooh) and glued to the resin and wire mirror supports. Tools, ammunition boxes from the spares box and the painted bridging disc were added last and the vehicle was complete.



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Conclusion

This kit was a nice addition to any soft skin collection and captures the look of these small trucks. Better quality control over the resin parts would go a long way toward improving the kit. This would remove or improve parts suffering from offset molding due to torn molds, holes from air bubbles and the odd addition of extra tape to highly noticeable parts. Less time would be spent on sanding and filling and the builder would enjoy the kit and its simple assembly much more. Overall, the Roy Models kit was easy to build. It was a nice portrayal of a common war truck and a welcomed addition to allied soft skin vehicles in 1/35 scale.

—Carlos D'Arcy

MMiR RECCE

Roy Models Ford WOT 2B GS Van. Kit number RM 0020. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price unavailable at press time (sorry!).

References

Battle- *Focus on Allied Softskins #18*, Mike Conniford, October 1977.
Bellona, *Military Vehicle Data #7*, Model & Allied Publications, London, 1971.
British Light Military Trucks 1939-1945, Mike Conniford, Argus Books Ltd., England, 1976. ISBN 0852424477.
Historic Military Vehicles Directory, Bart Vanderveen, After the Battle Publication, Great Britain, 1989. ISBN 0900913576.

If it's not Accurate Armour...

My wife and I try to visit our homeland of Scotland every year or so. Actually, both of us are several generations removed from the highlands, but our hearts are still there. We are descendants from two different Scottish clans, but apparently not two that fought, which is saying a lot. Since we fly into and out of Glasgow one of my and consequently, my wife's first stops is always a visit with the friendly folks at Accurate Armour (I have a very understanding wife). We stopped there again this spring on our pilgrimage to Scotland, and I decided to take a few photos and see if I could pass on any information about this important resin kit manufacturer to our readers.

Accurate Armour is located west of Glasgow at the Port of Glasgow on the Clyde Estuary near Greenock. Since the Glasgow airport is also on the west side of Glasgow it is only about a 30 minute drive to this small little town, even when you are still trying to adjust to driving on the "wrong" side of the road. Another thing that makes the trip easy is it is a divided highway from the airport all the way until you get into the Port of Glasgow.

As you would expect, Accurate Armour is a small business and located in an industrial park on the north side of the main road between the Port of Glasgow and Greenock. When you enter the main door you are in a small showroom and that's as far as you go. On the walls are shelves of Accurate Armour models, mostly built, past, present, and if you are lucky, future. If you are planning a visit, it is always a good idea to call or e-mail in advance, otherwise these folks may be out at a show or on a bank holiday.

On this trip we were met by Derek Hansen, the president and owner, and David Farrell, the sales and customer service manager. As would be expected the warm highland hospitality comes out and they made us feel right at home. David is the person you would normally see on your visits since one of his jobs is taking care of customers. If you plan to buy anything, it is a good idea to let David know ahead of time and he will have your package waiting when you show up.

Accurate Armour was founded as a business in 1987. The company's aim, according to Derek, is the production of quality models of interesting and unusual military subjects. They now have over 100 full model kits in their extensive and ever growing production line. They also produce complementary products, such as conversions, accessories, decals and diorama accessories. Additionally, they have two other lines of accessories, including resin track and figures sold under the names of TRAKPAX and TANK TROOPS. They have some rather unusual museum quality models that include submarines, rockets and larger scale AFV's. David said that ever since they went on the Internet, their business has dramatically grown.

Unfortunately, one restriction they have is they will not let visitors into the magical kingdom of their design and production faculty. Some nonsense about insurance, but I am sure they just thought we might be spies. They did show us a couple of new products they were about to release and by the time



1. The other main wall of shelves with a number of the newly released or soon to be released kits. 2. One of the two walls containing all the old, current, and new stuff. Note the great limited run paintings they have available for sale. 3. Three of the new Centurions in their line soon to be released. 4. The front of Accurate Armour. It is located in an industrial park between the towns of Port of Glasgow and Greenock. As you can see it is a typical Scotland sun shiny day!

you are reading this they probably will have. The biggest news for them was the imminent release of the Oshkosh tractor and semi-trailer HET. I actually got a peek at and held one of the bogie wheel sets and the main

frame for it. Another item I have personally been waiting several years for is the release of the U.S. Army M114. They will be releasing a Vietnam and NATO 20mm cannon version. Although they released this kit a number of years ago, this is a totally new kit with a complete interior.

It is also interesting to know some of the things that a model producer has to deal with that I would not even have thought of. David was showing us the new Land Rover truck and said it took two months to design and produce the model, but two years to get Land Rover to give them the rights to use the name. We also saw three new Centurions and a really neat British X-Craft miniature submarine that was about to be released.

Who does all of this great work you might ask? Well it appears that Derek heads up a team of very talented designers and pattern makers that include; Jon Bottomley, Tim Babb and Phil Hendry. They also employ a number of freelance designers.

To produce their products their production team uses polyurethane resin castings for most large parts, metal castings for detail parts where strength is needed, and photo-etched brass for mesh, gun-sights, and other fine items. The castings are produced by hand from molds taken from the master models and all products are considered limited run items.

As anyone knows who visits their website, Accurate Armour also acts as a distributor for products from a number of other companies. To show this is a family business both Derek and wife, Janet, along with David are deeply involved in the running, ordering and dispatch operations. This includes dealing with the other manufacturers, as well.

So for anyone lucky enough to be passing through Glasgow on a trip, take a few minutes and drop by Accurate Armour and pick up a few things, or check out the latest products. My first trip to Accurate was several years ago on our honeymoon and I just happened to pick up a couple of wee kits, including a Conqueror Heavy Gun Tank and Tortoise Super Heavy Tank. I told you I have an understanding wife! ☺

—Jim Hensley

A little Gem from the East

BUILDING THE TRUMPETER BJ-212A w/105MM TYPE 75 RECOILLESS RIFLE



The Type 75 105mm recoilless rifle is currently the mainstay of antitank defenses in the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA). The rifle began development in the 60's and was finally approved for production in 1975. Isn't it funny how these "Type" names and production dates always seem to be the same. Is this a coincidence, you ask? I think not! Anyway, the Type 75 normally has a five-man crew and can be mounted and fired from the BJ-212 Jeep, or removed and used in the ground role.

The Type 75 can fire high explosive, high explosive fragmentation and armor piercing rounds. Some of the newer rounds are now fin-stabilized. The maximum range of the weapon is 1,000 meters, with an effective range of 580 meters. It has a maximum armor-piercing capability of 150mm on 60 degree angled armor. The Type 75 is widely deployed with PLA antitank units and their airborne forces. As in other armies, the PLA is starting to replace these with antitank missiles.

The BJ212 has been serving with the PLA for more than three decades. Production began in 1964 and continued until 1993 at the Beijing Automotive Works. The BJ-212 Jeep is a 1/2 ton truck used in the Chinese Army as a light tactical transportation, command and control, special purpose shelter carrier, and it can mount special purpose weapons, such as the 105mm recoilless rifle. The BJ-212

reportedly has a fair cross-country capability.

The BJ-212 was based on the Soviet UAZ-469 and even uses the same 4 cylinder 2500cc, 71 hp engine. Originally, it was sold exclusively to the Chinese Army, but as the design got old it was also sold to civilians. An improved version was made called the BJ-2020, containing a better engine and other minor improvements. This model is labeled as BJ212A.

Can I speak with Trumpeter, please?

This is the first kit I have seen from Trumpeter that even got me excited. Their first efforts were more in the toy category, rather than scale models. This has completely changed with this kit, along with some of the others that have recently being released. The kit consists of six sprues in a light olive drab color, one in light gray (the figures), the jeep body by itself, a clear plastic sprue, five rubber tires and a metal shaft, for a total of 219 parts. One of the sprues is just for the 105mm recoilless rifle, which means it could be released separately. Also included is a decal sheet for the airborne version. The small instruction booklet is in Chinese and English and is very clear and well illustrated. Painting instructions are scattered throughout the guide for individual parts, plus paint schemes for a regular army vehicle and the camouflaged airborne version.

Easy construction

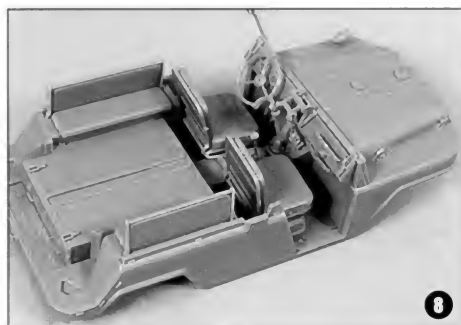
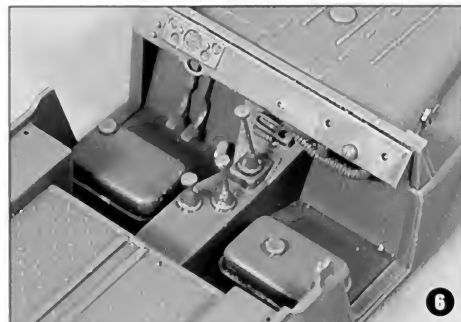
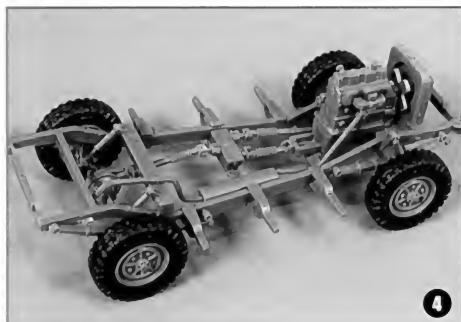
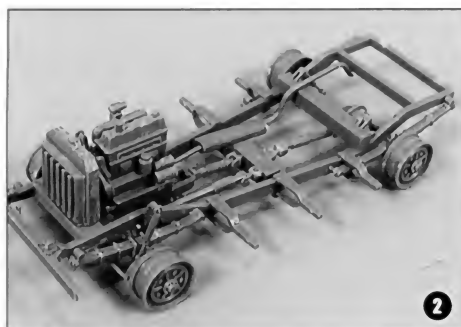
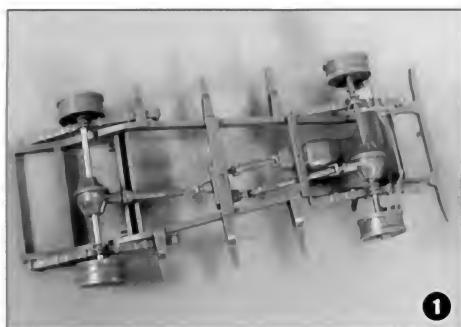
I started with assembling the engine. The

engine is very complete and includes 17 pieces. I found that while the plastic takes regular liquid cement well. This was certainly not true with their early efforts and it is still a little slow in attaching. For those who have attempted earlier Trumpeter kits, you will know the history here. I tried to build the T-55 a couple of years ago and because of the plastic they were using, the parts kept falling off. Earlier kits were even worse. You had to use super-glue, since the glue supplied with the kit did not work. But, on to better days.

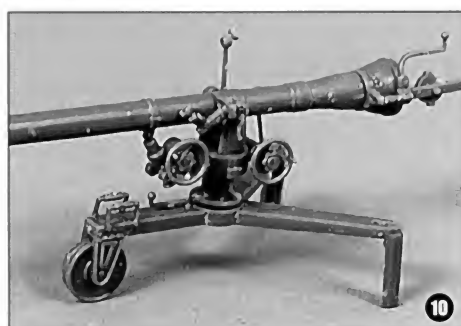
The wheels were assembled, then detailing on the one-piece frame was started. There are some small hinges that are glued to the frame. The leaf springs have very small and delicate "U" clamps that go on the sides. Be careful, because these little clamps are just as easy to break as they look.

The springs were then glued onto the frame. The front and rear differentials were assembled along with the center junction box, the axles and the wheels. This was a little tricky and the whole arrangement is rather delicate so be careful. The rear axle is a steel rod, but the front is a combination of parts and not as sturdy. Once everything was attached, I set this whole assembly aside to dry overnight.

The engine assembly and radiator were then glued on the frame, along with the three drive shafts. The tie rod for the front tires was a little difficult to get on and I wished I had put the pins (B23)



1. The frame is one piece but there are a lot of little pieces to add. The rear axle is steel, so it posed no problems, but the front axle is a combination of parts making it rather weak and a little difficult to align. 2. The engine is unbelievable with 17 parts. The exhaust system has now been installed along with the radiator and shocks. 3. One of my favorite items in the kit, are the tires. They are hollow and the tread is already worn, with no seam to remove. 4. Ready for a test drive. I put the wheels on for a test fitting and found they go on very easily. The rubber is rather thin, so I am hoping they don't split. The good news is there is very little stress on them, which might make a difference. Time will tell. 5. The chassis is one piece, with no mold release marks showing. I have already glued the hood and rear platform on. 6. The details in the cab area are also remarkable. The full heater system, pedals and shifts are all present. The two gas tanks are installed and now just waiting for the seats. 7. The seats were a little delicate to assemble, but they are now ready to install. 8. The rest of the interior is now complete, along with the travel lock for the gun. 9.



You get the choice of having the breech on the recoilless rifle open or closed. 10. Here you can see the details on the other side. The whole rifle is a work of art and has extremely fine details. 11. I kind of stuck things together to get a photograph. I left the rifle, doors, windshield and tires off until after painting. I have yet to attach the frame to the body.

on before attaching the wheels. The muffler was then glued on. To get it to match up with the manifold on the engine, I had to trim off about 1/4" of the pipe. The shocks were next and I found it a little puzzling that they seem to just float on the axles but I had no reference for how they are attached, so I went with the instructions.

While the frame was drying, I started on the chassis. I was super impressed with the quality of the casting. The main chassis is one piece and wrapped separately. The surprising thing to me was I could not find the pour gate. Also the only mold release marks were well hidden underneath the wheel wells. I glued on the two engine compartment partitions; B16 and B17 but skipped the rest of

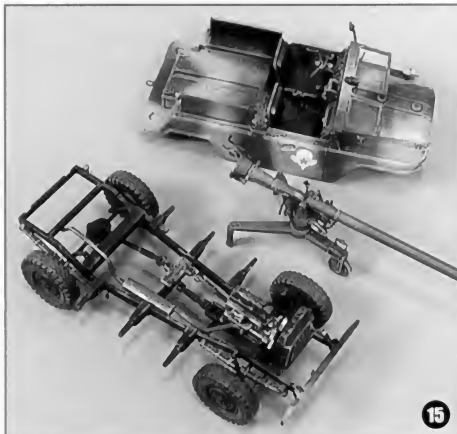
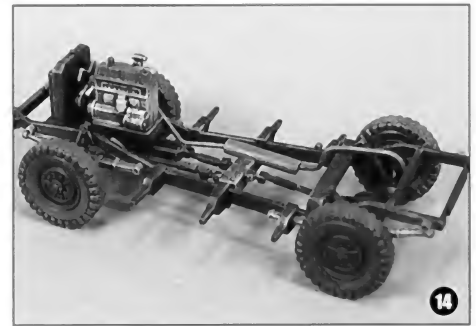
the parts in this step since they were clear plastic. I glued the hood on first, but watch out for the four tiny holes. Do not cover them up, since you will need them later. I then glued the rear of the hood, D24, to the windshield mount, D12. This was then all glued to the chassis and rear of the hood. The platform for the recoilless rifle was then assembled and glued in. I left the windshield off, since I planned to have it in the lowered position.

Next was to detail the interior and there are a lot of tiny parts here. I don't believe anyone should bother with a photo-etch set for this kit because the quality of the really small parts cannot be improved. The seats were assembled then glued in. I originally put the steering wheel in but took it out

to allow the driver to be inserted after painting. I also left the doors off until after painting started.

The recoilless gun was next and it is a beauty. Again, very small and delicate details all over it. It can be built with the breech open or closed and since I wanted to use the crew, I decided to open it. You do need a lot of patience on this little guy because of the various small parts. I also left it off the jeep until after painting.

The last thing I actually looked at on the jeep were the tires and I was absolutely ecstatic. I normally hate rubber tires because of that damn seam line that runs around them. I don't know about other modelers but I have never had much luck removing them entirely. This includes mounting



12. The figures were not too bad, except their hands were huge. Also, the helmets needed a lot of clean up to remove the large band around them. 13. I replaced the hands with parts from other kits. They were painted with a combination of oils and Vallejo paints. 14. The completed frame and engine. The tires were dry brushed a little, but otherwise untouched. 15. The kit was basically painted in three main components. It was very easy to put them together after the painting was completed. 16-18. The dashboard dials were spruced up with some Fingerprint Design decals. The three crew figures added a little life to the scene. They are wearing tennis shoes, which I think is pretty cool. I wonder if they jump in them?

them on a Dremel tool. I have also noticed when judging at shows that at least some other modelers have the same problem. No problem here, though. The tires are molded hollow in real rubber and are probably close to scale thickness. They slip right on without any effort, which I hope means they will not split later since there is no stress on them. The best part is not only is there no seam line, the tread is actually already worn down. What a great idea.

Painting the airborne way

The Trumpeter instructions reference all the colors for Mr. Gunze paints. Since I don't have a color conversion chart for these paints, I matched the colors from the box art. Being a retired Army Jumpmaster I had to, of course, paint this little guy

up as an airborne vehicle, plus it is just more colorful. For those of you who like the airborne decals, but not the camouflage—no problem. I found one photo on the Internet of an airborne BJ212 with a 105 in a single color dark green and the large airborne symbols on the doors. Anyway, I sprayed the frame with Tamiya flat black and the rest of the jeep with Tamiya flat green. I then painted a camouflage pattern using Tamiya black green and dark yellow. I went back and painted all the little details, using the kit's rather extensive instructions, with Vallejo paints. I figure they probably had access to the real thing, which is something I am sure I never will, so I just followed their color choices.

I then sprayed the doors with clear gloss and put the airborne decals on. I also put dials on the dash

using Fingerprint Designs decal set for US vehicles. Numbers are numbers, right? After the decals were dry I sprayed them with Polly Scale clear flat to seal them. I then gave everything a wash of very thin black oil paint. I dry brushed everything very lightly with oils since I did not want this looking too used. Generally, equipment in a peacetime army, especially equipment that belongs to an elite force, gets pretty well maintained. The clear plastic parts were then glued on and painted with orange and red as appropriate. I painted the insides of the headlights with silver before gluing the lenses in.

Adding figures

I wanted to use the kit figures since this was a review of the kit, but also because they looked kind

of interesting. They are not quite as good as DML's newer figures, but they are not bad either. The detail on them is a little soft and their hands are very big. This is the one area the instructions fall a little short. Apparently, someone did not get the word on the sprue numbering system and almost nothing matches. It is not hard to figure out, since each figure is placed on the sprue along with all its body parts. Anyway, where else are you going to find any modern PLA troops? Besides the over size hands, the only other real problem are the helmets. They have a very pronounced ridge running around them that took a file to smooth out. Another neat feature, at least for me, is these guys are even wearing tennis shoes. After looking at the figures for a while, I decided I just had to replace the hands. I went into the spares box and pulled out a few limbs with hands matching the position of the figures. The figures were then sprayed with Tamiya flesh as

a base. I then painted their faces and hands with oil paints, and the uniforms and equipment with Vallejo paints. The pattern of their camouflage is shown in the instructions, plus I found a decent color photo of some PLA troops in the same uniform, which helped. I put the whole thing on a wooden base, mainly to give the reloading figure a place to stand.

Results

I don't remember when I have enjoyed building

a kit so much. This little guy is a real gem and if this is any indication of where Trumpeter is going, look out Tamiya and others! The detail was absolutely outstanding and I think I only had to remove two mold release marks, and they were small. The parts were very cleanly molded with almost no mold lines and no flash. The only slight criticism I have of the kit is the decals, which were off register a little. For twenty bucks, you really cannot go wrong with this kit. ☒

—Jim Hensley

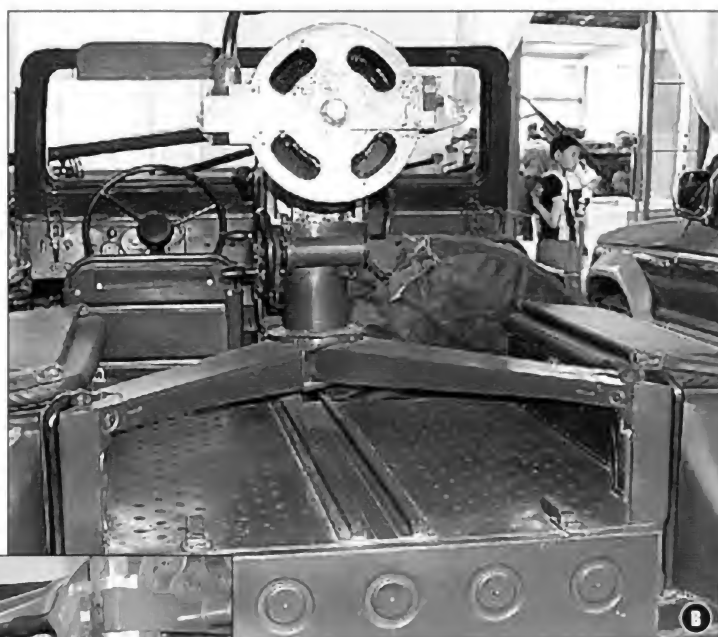
MMiR RECCE

Trumpeter Chinese BJ212A w/105mm Type 75 Recoilless Rifle. Kit number 02301. Kit graciously provided by Trumpeter's U.S. importer, Stevens International. Suggested retail price \$19.95.

References

You're looking at 'em!

THE REAL DEAL



A. This is a BJ212 with a Type 75 105mm recoilless rifle that is currently at the Beijing Military Museum. Larry Yu, who took the photographs has kindly given permission to use them in this article. B. A good shot of the rear of the rifle. For those who don't know, the purpose of the recoilless rifle is to let all of the gas out the back, thus reducing recoil. C. The 105's controls. I gather the painting instructions in the kit reflect this vehicle, since they match. D. Looking down the business end. The two holes in the hood are supposed to have caps over them. E. Some nice details of the driver's side. F. A view of the grill and headlights. G. The rear bumper reflectors and lights. I am not sure what the purpose of the indentations on the rear is, but they look about the size of the shell casings.



A peek at what's new on the figure front!

MiniMen

Corpus

This all-new line from Hungary makes its MiniMen debut (exciting, huh?). You may recognize these dudes from last issue's new product section. First up is **35-002, German Mechanic (1)**. This simple one-piece casting is depicted wearing a one-piece field gray coverall and low cut black boots. He's copping a smoke and generally just hanging out.

35-004, German Tank Officer (2), is another one-piece casting. The 1943-camouflage suit is being worn over the standard battle uniform. Obviously, you can choose which side is out. The Feldmutze is being worn minus the stiffener and he's walking on black leather boots. The number and execution of the clothing folds are particularly well done.

35-005, US Mechanic (3), yet another single hunk of resin, this mechanic wears the M1941 field jacket with HBT trousers and cloth topped four buckle overshoes with rubber soles. The overshoes are unbuckled and are hanging open at the top. The helmet is cocked at a jaunty angle and the figure has a great relaxed and frumpy look.

We look forward to seeing more figures in this line.

Dragon

It's always a special treat to check out the latest plastic extravaganza from Dragon. **6158, German Infantry, HG Division (Anzio 1944) (4)**, is the current treat. We'll take a look at this group of dudes all together as a lot of details are found on each guy. The Luftwaffe splinter pattern camo smock is worn along with gray blue greatcoat and fliegerbluse. The equipment belt, suspenders are in brown leather, as are the low boots with gray blue anklets reinforced with brown leather, and one of the figures wears a pair of black leather jackboots. The weapons are the standard issue, MP40, K-98, MG42, and pistols. The individuals carry canteens, breadbaskets, gas masks entrenching tools and the NCO wears a pair of bino's. The MG gunner has the MG maintenance kit on his pistol belt. The NCO also has a folding spade tucked into his belt, like the one small entrenching tool carried by the soldier.

As always the tooling and execution get better every time. More please!

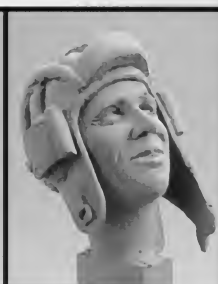
Hornet

You know... There are good figures, then there are "good" figures. The Hornet line doesn't grow by leaps and bounds, but rather by carefully measured increments. Yet another of these increments is **HRH 05, five heads with Soviet WWII soft tanker helmets (5)**. As usual, these five replacement heads have a different facial expression for each. They wear the Russian tanker's padded helmet with the earflaps. The able talents of Roger Saunders are well expressed in the helmets. Each of the helmets is rendered just slightly different, imparting a highly realistic look and feel.

We can imagine all manner of plastic nasties being transformed by these little beauties. Such a figure would be the perfect way to top off your IS-II, IS-III or T-34

Lincoln County Line

LCL, VLS's value priced figure line now offers up **LC 0014, Tiger I**





Crew Mediterranean Uniforms (6). In this crew set you get three figures, one half figure and two cut about mid thigh. They all have the tropical uniforms, two with the short sleeved tan shirts. The tank commander wears the tan tunic over his shirt. The forage cap is worn by two of the crew, also presumably in tan and the driver wears a tan field cap.

This is a very nice grouping of figures and we especially liked the way the commander is leaning out of the hatch on his elbow. Although they are labeled as a Tiger crew, they would look terrific manning a Panzer IV or a Panzer III.

These figures were originally offered as Harper Castings and were initially not widely available under that name. If you missed them the first time and have been looking, now's your chance.

MK 35

We don't get many samples from these guys, but it's always a pleasure when we do. The subjects are just so unique. First up is **F132, Civilian leaning on his shovel (7).** He's an easy one, simply apply paint in any color your heart desires and you have a great civilian to add to your dio. With his shovel and smoke he cops a casual stance and would look perfect gazing at a passing Panther or Sherman.

Next we have **F134, WWII U.S. Mechanic #1 (8).** This is a squatting figure wearing the third pattern HBT work suit and M1941 HBT hat. He's shod with brown leather low cut boots. This is a useful casting and he could be posed working on just about anything.

Here's a neat idea. **F137, WWII U.S. Dodge Crew Members (9)** is a two figure set featuring crewmen for any of the Dodge 3/4-ton trucks out there. Both wear the enlisted men's wool shirt and trousers. Both have brown leather ankle boots and the standing figure is wearing a pair of leggings. Very versatile.

F138, U.S. or French soldier laying 1944/45 (10), is perhaps the most unique of the lot. This GI has racked out covered by his enlisted men's overcoat. Peeking out, exposed, are the wool trousers, leggings and brown leather boots. A couple of folded items make up his pillow.

This is a single piece casting and he'd look great in the back of a truck or in the loft of a barn. The box art shows him lying on snow covered ground, but as many of you know, racking out on bare ground brings on the hypothermia pretty fast!

Nemrod

Two great looking new dudes from Nemrod. First up is **35041, Pathfinder Normandy June 44 (11).** This pathfinder has all he needs for the first couple of days strapped right on, until a re-supply can catch up with him. From the top down, he sports the M1C helmet with net, M1942 parachute jumper's coat,

trousers with reinforcement patches and Corcoran boots. The equipment carried on the M1936 pistol belt is a .45 cal pistol, a rigger-made five magazine pouch, canteen, the shortened M1943 entrenching tool and gas mask. Hooked to the suspenders are two five magazine pouches for his Thompson. A M1936 musette bag is carried on the back. An M3 fighting

knife and a rigger-made first aid pouch are strapped around the right leg. Wrapped around the right arm is sleeve gas detector, which a very nice touch.

His buddy is **35042, Pathfinder Normandy June 44 (12)**. Our second pathfinder has almost all the same gear and uniform as the first, so let's just touch on what's different. On his suspenders is a rigger-made pouch for a hand grenade and across his chest are two six-pocket cotton ammunition bandoleers. This guy's model M1910 entrenching tool is carried on his pistol belt. In his right hand is the "Cricket." This is the clicking device used to tell friend from foe. The weapon carried is the M1 Garand.

Resicast

Resicast continues its airborne invasion with **35573, Para & 2-inch mortar (13)**. This team wears the airborne troop's helmet, one with netting and one without. Both also wear the Denison smock, parachutist trousers, ankle boots in black leather and anklets. They are firing the 2-inch mortar and also tote the triple compressed cardboard tubes to carry six 2-inch mortar rounds. The mortar man has pattern 42 RAC pistol case for a Mk.I revolver and the AG is armed with a No.4 Mark I rifle.

Next up is **35574, Para running with Bren (14)**. This Para has the Bren gun and is moving out with a purpose. The uniform is also the airborne troops helmet with netting, Denison smock, parachutist trousers, ankle boots in black leather and anklets. His ensemble is rounded out with the pattern 1937 equipment belt, basic pouches, braces (suspenders), 2-pint water bottle and carrier, and in his left hand, the Bren wallet.

Would you like to eat your Para here or have your **35575, Para ready to go (15)**. The name says it all! Decked out identically to the above figure, this guy is really kicking it out.





35576, Para lying firing Sten (16) is a neat one. With this Para you get a great little base with a log on a little rise to take cover behind. Once again, the standard airborne troop's rig is worn. The weapon is the Mk.V Sten gun.

A simple, but useful piece is **35577, Mechanic (17)**. This mechanic has dressed down for work with the wool shirt, braces, early pattern trousers and boots. Goggles, work gloves and a set of calipers round him out. He is intended to work in the back of Resicast's new Leyland workshop truck, but he'd look good in any breakdown scene.

Verlinden

We haven't had a visit from VP Mini-Men in a while. Forgive us while we play a bit of catch-up. First to the plate is **1837, Get Up! (18)**. For you, the war is over! An American officer has got the bead on a prone German. The U.S. captain wears the OD field jacket with a scarf around the neck, wool trousers, leggings and brown leather boots. Like any proper officer he's further decked out in M1936 suspenders, pistol belt, holster, canteen, first aid pouch and pistol magazine pocket. The bummed out German has a reversible white/camouflage parka, wool scarf, padded mittens, black leather ankle boots, black leather belt, cartridge pouches with bread bag,



and a canteen and map case. This set would be great as a vignette, or either figure would fit into a number of different scenes.

In the "action packed" category is **1838, German Infantry "Fire!" (19)**. These guys are tricked out in the full array of camo clothing. This would most likely box them in as SS, but they could easily be painted in a Wehrmacht pattern. Both have the full kit with

the suspender belt and respective ammo pouches for an MP40 and Kar 98. The individual equipment includes a gas mask, bread bag, canteen, shovel with knife and a mess tin. Both wear ankle boots.

We especially liked the guy firing the Kar 98. He's sort of kicked back on his heels. The box top shows him bracing himself against a wall, but he would work equally well in a doorway or on a vehicle.

1839, US Tankers "There!" (20), is another two-figure set. This time, it's two tankers taking a look at a map. Our chin holding fellow is topped with the M1942 armored forces helmet, winter combat jacket, wool trousers, brown leather boots and leggings. Unusual for a tanker, he wears the M1936 suspenders with a pistol belt with a .45 cal pistol and a canteen.

The tanker with the map has the winter combat trousers worn over the winter combat jacket with brown leather boots. He also wears a pistol belt with a .45 and a set of goggles on his steel pot. This last guy is something special. The way his combat trousers drape over his lower body is very well done.

1840, German Infantry Snow Dress (21) is a couple of "Frigid Fritzes." Our first contestant has a field cap being worn with the sides folded down, something you don't see on figures very often. A unit made camo apron is being worn over the great coat. He also wears the black leather belt, including a pistol with a case, MP40 ammo pouch, entrenching tool, bayonet, gas mask, bread bag and canteen. He also has acquired the heavy felt and leather cold weather overshoes and is armed with an MP40.

His buddy wears a helmet topped with a white cover. A simple white smock is worn over his great coat. Black leather boots, belt, suspenders, ammo pouches, entrenching tool with bayonet, gas mask, mess tin, bread bag, canteen and a K98 round him out. It makes ya chilly just looking at them!

Look for more VP dudes in the next issue!

Warriors

WA 35449, Sitting SS Grenadier #2 (22) is a handy little sculpture to have on hand. He is a seated grenadier with a camo smock, field gray trousers, black jackboots, black leather belt, ammo pouches, breadbasket and all the other necessary gear. One interesting feature is a stick grenade stuck in his book. Great for the back of a tank or other vehicle.

WA 35450, Hit the Beach, Pt. 1 (23) is pretty exciting concept. The set, which is rumored to be the first of many, depicts three combat ready Marines jumping over the side of an LVT. Since they are "ready to go," we'll cover these guys all together. All have helmets with camo covers and the two piece dungarees are worn. Brown leather boots are worn and two wear gaiters/leggings/spats. All carry the M1 Garand rifle. The pistol belt and suspenders are the common 1936 model with ammo pouches, canteen, first aid pouch and k-bar. The field pack has the M1910 entrenching tool mounted on. More please.

WA 35451, WWII Japanese Tankette Crew (One full & One half figure) (24), provides a full figure of a tank commander who is wearing the khaki drill uniform and a soft field cap. He also wears a brown leather





27



30



28



29

belt and pistol. The driver has a soft field cap and the khaki drill uniform. Perfect to keep your next FineMolds kit company.

WA 35452, SS Officer & Grenadier 1943-45 (25) contains another chilly pair of Nazis, one an officer and the other an enlisted man. The officer wears the peaked cap with stiffener removed; cold weather "Kharkov" parka lined with sheepskin and a rabbit lined fur hood with white reversible trousers. A black leather belt with holster map case goes around the middle. He's holding a P38 pistol.

The grenadier wears the forage cap over a Balaklava. Over his great coat is a camo smock and under it are field gray trousers and black leather boots. On his leather belt are the pistol, breadbasket, mess tin, canteen and MG maintenance kit for his MG42.

WA 35457, "Like Father, Like Son" (Berlin, 1945) (26) makes up an instant vignette and has a lot to go around. You get a T34 knocked out (at least half of it) on a great base with all kinds of rubble and the tank's thrown track. The father figure wears a field gray jacket with sweater underneath, camo trousers and black leather boots. His black leather belt has the ammo pouch for the MP40 and a stick grenade tucked into it. The Hitler Youth type wears a field cap, a small version of the standard field gray tunic and trousers with scarf around his neck. He is armed with a K98 and Panzerfaust. The black leather belt has the ammo pouches, a knife, breadbasket and canteen.

WA 35461, WWII Japanese Officer & Mortarman (27) depicts two happy Nipponese dudes trudging along. Both wear the khaki cotton drill uniform. The motor man has puttees over his boots, while the officer has brown leather tail boots. The officer has a pistol, gas mask, canteen, small field pack and a samurai sword. The mortar man has the trench mortar and on the front of his belt are pouches for the shells. A small field pack is also worn with canteen, gas mask and extra cartridge case. These cats would go great with the previously released IJA walkers. And you thought nothing different ever gets released...

Wolf

Go ahead, it's OK to cry Wolf. The latest trio starts with **WAW 35, Leaning SS soldier in short winter jacket, WWII** (28). This is a great one-piece figure and there's no fuss with this guy. He wears the 1943 feldmütze, reversible camo/white jacket and trousers, scarf, field gray shirt and black leather boots. A pair of bino's hangs around the neck inside the jacket. Very cool.

WAW 36, German officer wearing watch coat, WWII (29) depicts an officer wearing a peaked cap with the stiffener removed. His great coat is done up all the way to his chin, and underneath is a pair of over white or reversible trousers and pair of black leather boots. A pair of bino's hangs around his neck.

Bringing up the rear is **WAW 37, German soldier WW2 wearing zeltbahn poncho** (30). This is another great no fuss one piece figure. This guy wears the 1943 Feldmütze, a Zeltbahn tent quarter, field gray trousers and black leather boots. It looks like his left hand has been left open to receive a rifle or a strap, but nothing else is provided in the kit. This makes it your choice!

The respective manufacturers have provided the figures contained in this issue's Mini-Men. The single exception is Corpus, which were provided by Mission Models.

Will the real M41A3 please stand up?



OR TAKE 10
PACES, TURN
AND FIRE



After World War II the United States, like most of the belligerents, immediately cut or stopped all tank production. However, this did not stop the U.S. Army Ordnance Department from studying lessons learned from the combat experience gained during the war. One of the areas that was studied was the role of the light tank. It was found that while the designed role for the light tank was to scout and screen and not engage other armor, it was not often used that way. In real life, it was often used in direct combat and because of this, a heavier gun was needed. When the war ended, the Army had the excellent M-24 Chaffee light tank had served well, but was still no match for heavier armor. As the Cold War started to materialize and the Soviet Union was becoming the primary opponent, it was recognized that a new light tank with a larger main gun was needed. This led to the program, which started in 1949, to develop a new light tank.

The first result of this new program was the T37 prototype light tank. The T37 had three phases of development. The first was a rather unusual design that included the T94 76mm main gun, a coaxial .50 cal machine gun, plus another .50 cal mounted on the roof of the turret for local and air defense. So far pretty normal. Now for the weird stuff. It included two .30 cal machine guns mounted in pods on the sides of the tank

and remotely controlled. It also had a pair of humungous "May West" bumps on both sides of the turret for the stereoscopic rangefinder with an automatic lead computer and ballistic corrector. Talking about large shot traps. And, all of this on a 24-

ton chassis. Common sense and lack of money finally prevailed and after the Phase II turret came out, it was changed back to a more practical design by dropping the machine gun pods and expensive stereoscopic rangefinder. This modified Phase II became the T41E1



1



2

1. This is the basic hull of the Skybow kit with the four top hull pieces glued on. 2. The fenders for the Skybow kit are very thin and appear warped, but



3

when glued to the hull, they are fine. 3. The Skybow kit with the fenders glued on.



4. The basic turret of the Skybow kit. The fit was excellent between the top and bottom pieces. 5. The Skybow mantlet cover. The ridge resisted all attempts to completely remove. The rubber is very thin, so I was afraid too much cutting or filing could be dangerous. 6. The Skybow turret with the majority of the small items glued on. The handholds are butted against the turret side. 7. A rear view of the Skybow turret showing the machine gun tripod mount and gas cans. 8. The completed turret of the Skybow kit. Notice the single machine gun mount to the left front of the commander's cupola. 9. The other side of the Skybow turret. The barrel, bore evacuator and single baffle muzzle brake are two piece assemblies, so the seam is a problem to remove. 10. The completed Skybow chassis. Both kits furnish string for the tow cable, but I substituted some tow cable out of my spares box. 11. The Skybow APU muffler on top of the right muffler makes this mid production vehicle somewhere between numbers 1368-2289, but the suspension doesn't quite match.

and was eventually put into production as the M41. There was a phase III, which had an experimental autoloader and eventually redesignated as the T49, but that is another story.

The initial order for 1,000 T41E1's was placed with the Cadillac Motor Car Division of the General Motors Corporation in 1950. The T41/M41 was built at the new production facility in Cleveland, Ohio. The designator M41 and M41A1 were not made official until 29 May 1953. The final version of the main weapon was the M32 76mm gun and the coaxial was switched from a .50 to a .30 cal machine gun. Although there are four basic variants of the M41, externally it is almost impossible to tell them apart. There was the M41, which was originally the T41E1. Then there was the M41A1, which was originally the T41E2. The main difference between these two was the turret traverse was switched from an electric to a hydraulic system, because it was initially felt the electric traverse and related targeting system were too slow. The M41A2 had a new fuel injected engine because of poor mileage. The M41A3 was the final version and was very similar to the M41A2. The only difference I could find was the M41A3 apparently could use infrared equipment.

The T41E1 initially got the nickname "Little

Bulldog," which was unusual since U.S. tanks usually got named after famous generals. This was changed later to "Walker Bulldog," to honor General Walton Walker, the US commander in Korea, who had been killed in a jeep accident in early 1951.

The M41 has a fairly unique place in history with the US Army in that, although production started in 1950, it missed seeing any real action in the Korean War and by the time we were in Vietnam, the Sheridan had replaced it. It was, however, sent in large numbers to our Vietnamese counterparts and saw action in their hands. The only M41's I saw in Vietnam were ones that belonged to the ARVN 2nd Infantry Division, which I was assigned to as an advisor. These were deployed around the division headquarters in Quang Ngai City and served as fixed pillboxes. I call them "fixed," since I don't think they had run for several years before I got there. The M41 continued to be produced until 1954, with a total of 3,729 being built. It was used by a number of our allies in addition to the Vietnamese, such as the West Germans, Nationalist Chinese, and South Koreans to mention a few.

My approach to the comparison

I approached these kits by trying to build both of

them out of the box as much as possible to provide a better comparison for you. As I found more mistakes, that job got harder and harder, since I hate building something I know is wrong. Oh well, the life of a reviewer. I have written about the kits in the order I built them, starting with the Skybow kit. It was easy keeping the building description short, since both kits went together rather well.

The Skybow kit

My initial reaction when I opened the box, was this is one sweet kit. I have never built a Skybow kit before so if I get excited about stuff everyone else is already aware of, please forgive me. The kit comes on eight sprues, plus the hull, cast in an olive drab plastic. It also has poly caps for the roadwheels, glueable tracks and best of all, a soft rubber mantlet cover. These items, plus some string and decals, comes to a total of 236 parts. The instructions are well illustrated and in Chinese and English. There are four paint schemes, along with decals to match for US Army, Taiwan Army, Taiwan Marine and South Vietnamese Army M-41s. The quality of the castings is everything I have heard about from this small, but prolific company. There were virtually no release marks, no flash and the seams were very small. They even packed the sprues in resealable plastic bags. Now, I think that is cool, but I am easily impressed. I had read that originally this kit was to be the M41A1 and the sprues are marked M41A1, but the instructions and box say M41A3. What's up with that?

Starting at the top

The Skybow instructions are a little different since they start with the turret instead of the suspension. I may be an old dog, but I am willing to try new things. The first thing I noticed was the detail and thinness of the plastic in the turret. Also, the fit was so good between the top and bottom turret half I had to pry the pieces apart to get the liquid glue to flow along the seam. Now, that is tight. I just could not stop there, so while it was drying, I jumped to the hull. Another unique approach here, is that the hull top is four pieces and appears to allow you to put an engine in and show it off. The unusual thing was that the side fenders are separate. Again, the fit was excellent. The fenders are very thin and one of mine had a slight warp on one of the small vertical pieces. A hairdryer fixed that problem. The fenders are a little flimsy because of the thinness, but don't worry. When you get them glued on to the hull, they will be fine. There are several pieces to assemble on them before attaching. These are the long



12. The AFV Club chassis has the more traditional construction, with the fenders being cast as part of the hull top. It too, had the individual hatches on the rear. 13. The AFV Club chassis also has a similar APU on its rear fender. 14. The AFV Club road wheels have a separate rim, making it possible to have the undercut. 15. The idler for the AFV Club is the steel rim without a rubber tire. This would make it from the first batch of M41's, that conflicts with the other components. 16. One of the two items that was under poured in the AFV Club kit was the bottom piece to the rear storage compartment. I made a replacement from sheet styrene. 17. One of the big pluses for the AFV Club kit is the turned aluminum barrel with the bore evacuator. The muzzle brake is a two-piece affair, which clamps around a ridge on the barrel. 18. Notice the two machine gun mounts on the AFV Club kit. This would date the turret to a very early model of the M41. The bad news is there is no provision for a mantlet cover. 19. A comparison of the two hulls together. The one on the left is the AFV Club hull. There is a noticeable difference in length here. 20. The rears of both kits are very detailed. The AFV Club on the left again. Notice that the drive sprocket on the AFV Club has the correct holes in it. 21. A comparison of the two turrets with the Skybow on the top. Unlike the chassis, the turrets are very close to the same size. Compare the locations of the machine gun mounts.



is that when you put it on you have to stretch it quite a bit over the mantlet and it is a tight fit. I am afraid over time this will split, unless it is some kind of special rubber, but time will tell. The gun barrel assembly was then glued to the turret.

Where is Step 4?

Okay, now for a surprise. I thought it was about time to put the suspension pieces on, so I started looking at the instructions.

The instructions jump from 3 to 5, skipping step 4. Okay, still no problem, but between 8 and 9 the drawings magically show the axles on. The problem is this is not a simple "glue the axles on" step. There are a number of parts you need to figure out, like shocks, etc. After carefully studying the drawings of the suspension parts, I figured out where the pieces go. First, the bumpers. There are three in the center on each side, which are parts E10. The front bumper is E11, the rear one is E12. Now for the axles. The four rear axles are parts E6. The front right idler mount is E17 and the left is E16. There are three shocks, two for the front two axles and one for the rear. These are pretty easy to figure out by just looking at the drawings. Once all the pieces were glued on I made sure they were lined up, since there was a little play, but not much. Actually, the axles with the shocks determine where to put the other axles, since there is no play in them at all.

Other details

The mufflers were assembled including the covers



tool storage boxes. Once these were on, I glued the fenders to the hull.

I then went back to the turret to finish it up. There are a number of small pieces for the turret that include a host of handles and antenna mounts. There is also the machine gun site, which normally I have only seen in photo-etch and it looks great. I glued all the hatches, although there was a little detail on the inside of the hatches and no other detail in the interior. I assembled the .50 cal machine gun and drilled its barrel out.

A very unique item for this kit is a canvas cover for the mantlet made out of some sort of soft rubber. It has to be put on the mantlet before the gun barrel is glued on. So, I first glued the barrel halves together and cleaned up the seam. If you plan to use the mantlet, it needs to be cleaned up first. There is a very prominent seam line that runs around the middle. I scraped and filed and just could not get it all off. I even tried freezing it and filing it off while frozen, but the rubber is soft and very thin that did not work either. I finally got enough off to live with, but one thing that worries me



22. The suspension on both kits is very similar. The AFV Club chassis on the top is a little lighter, or maybe more delicate is a better description. 23. Except for the undercut on the AFV Club roadwheels (on the right), they are very similar. 24. The AFV Club return rollers on the left are the later contoured rubber type, whereas the Skybow set is the earlier flat type.

and were glued on, along with the travel lock. The next two steps see most of the hull details being attached. There are a remarkable number of small parts, such as hooks, lights etc., on both ends. The guards for the headlights are very thin and I did not find it necessary to thin them at all. I hollowed out the headlights so I could use MV lenses later. I glued on the two tow cable hooks and added a piece of tow cable from my parts box.

The roadwheels, idlers, return rollers and drive sprockets were glued together. All except the return rollers have poly caps inside them. I then sanded the roadwheels with an emory board. I left all of them off until after painting. The kit included the middle version idlers with flat rubber tires and early, flat return rollers. This would narrow this tank to between number 2613 and 3375 in production. Of course, it could be an earlier version, which had its suspension parts replaced, but not a later version. Another thing that was a little strange was that the parts for the idlers are

numbered separately, but I will be darned if I could see any difference between them and the roadwheels. The drive sprockets did lack the holes that they should have.

Another strange thing were the tracks. First, they look great for rubber band tracks. They are the glueable type, but the instructions have the "do not glue" symbol on them. After deciding the instructions were probably wrong, I went ahead and holding my breath, glued them with liquid plastic cement. It worked and boy was I relieved. The one thing that does not work is that they have chosen to split the tracks along a pin that after several attempts, failed to glue. The solution was to tie them together with thin thread.

Painting the Skybow tank

The tank was first sprayed with Tamiya flat black. I then sprayed it with a mix of Tamiya olive drab and dark yellow to lighten the olive drab a little. I masked off the roadwheels, idler and return rollers to spray them. I sprayed the tracks with Polly Scale panzer red brown and quickly wiped off the paint on the rubber pads before the paint dried. I then went back and painted the details, like the tools, with Vallejo paints. I also painted the gas and water cans with Vallejo olive drab, just for a different shade. I have noticed that some modelers paint the muffler covers a rust color. The only photos I could find of running M41s do not show this being all that rusty, but defi-

nately discolored. I painted the mantlet cover with Vallejo khaki green.

For decals, I had a hard time deciding what to use. Because of the AFV Club kit's lack of a mantlet cover, I decided to make it a Vietnamese tank. Out of default, this one needed to be a U.S. tank. The decals are pretty limited for a U.S. tank, but I found a photo of one in Germany that had very large white stars on the turret and front. I used Archer's dry transfers for the stars, but for the vehicle numbers I used the Skybow decals. I first sprayed the areas with Tamiya clear gloss. Once the decals were on, I applied Solvaset over them to get them to fit the side boxes. After everything was dry, I sprayed the whole tank with Polly Scale clear flat to seal all the decals and flatten out the glossy areas.

I applied a thin black oil wash over the vehicle except the mantlet cover, of course, and the tracks. I used a wash on the cover and tracks made from Tamiya black and flat earth. If anyone does not know, mineral sprits tend to melt rubber/vinyl stuff and I did not want to take any chances. I then lightly dry brushed with titanium white, sap green and burnt umber oils. I mixed burnt umber and Rub n' Buff silver to dry brush the tracks and other metal parts including the tools and machine gun. I painted all the periscope faces with metallic blue enamel paint. I added the MV lenses, using #132 for the IR lights and #128 for the clear lights. The tracks went on without any problem, but they do tend to float a little.

The AFV Club kit

This kit is naturally very similar to the Skybow kit,



A close-up of the rear deck and turret area of the Skybow kit.

but there are a number of significant differences. The basics of the kit include nine sprues, a turned aluminum barrel, rubber tracks and the usual instructions and decals for a total of 286 parts. This kit also includes poly caps for the wheels. There are painting guides and decals for seven different vehicles, including two U.S. Army versions, two South Vietnamese and three ROC Marine versions. There is also a bonus in this kit of a four-piece machine gun shield for the ARVN version. The sticker on the box says it is an "Initial Sales Premium Machine Gun Shield." The biggest and most obvious omission of the kit is that there is no



This is the completed Skybow kit painted as a generic U.S. Army tank. The side numbers are from the kit's decal sheet, but the white stars are from Archer.

The AFV Club kit finished. This one is painted as a South Vietnamese Army M41. The stowage and configuration is almost identical to the Skybow kit.



mantlet cover. There is also a set of separate link tracks for this kit, but I did not have these for the review. Additionally, Hobby Fan, the expensive resin counterpart to AFV Club, offers an engine for the M41 that can be dropped in. Eduard's just released a photo-etch set for this tank, but again I did not want to use it to keep the comparison fair. The quality, while very good, does have problems. First, I had several pieces that were under poured and there was some flash in the molds, which for a brand new kit is surprising. The under pour is a problem I have read about on the Internet from some other modelers, so it is not unique to this kit. I would advise opening the box before purchasing, if you were buying your kit from a hobby shop. Also, the special shield is nothing more than a sprue from the M88 kit and pretty crude. You do get a bonus with the .50 cal sprue since it includes an M-60 machine gun.

This time, starting at the bottom

I started to follow the directions, but quickly started to jump around. The first step has you putting on details on the hull bottom. I personally like to get the big things together, like the hull halves, before adding detail. I therefore jumped to step 7, which includes adding the rear deck plates and sides and the bottoms of the toolboxes on the fenders. The fit on the toolboxes was excellent, however the rear deck piece, K21, is not good and there is a small gap between it and the hull bottom. You should add the driver's periscopes before assembling the hull top and bottom, but they do go in from the top. It is not absolutely mandatory, just easier. I then glued the hull top to the hull bottom, again with a good fit.

Neat suspension

Now for the good stuff. I assembled the roadwheels, idlers and drive sprockets. The reason I say the "good stuff," is because the outer roadwheels are two pieces. This allows for the inset inside the roadwheel that a one-piece mold would not allow. The idlers are the flat steel rim type of the early production models. They are in two pieces and although a little difficult to glue together, the results are all right. The drive sprockets are two pieces and have the correct holes in them. Now for something weird. The return rollers are the later production contoured type. This combination of early idler and late return rollers is not correct. I next assembled the suspension system. The good news here is there is, again, more detail here than with the Skybow kit. In step 4, you add the rear drive sprocket housings. Finally, a bit of bad news. The mounts for the sprockets are really poor. I am not sure what they were thinking here but they do not have near the strength to stand the stress of rubber band tracks. Actually, the whole suspension is rather delicate, but if you are careful this should not pose any problems. To correct for the weak drive sprockets, I drilled a hole in each one

and put steel wire in since I knew they would collapse when the track was put on.

Hull stuff

I then went around putting the details on the hull. There is a supplemental instruction sheet with an amended step 8. The mounts for the headlights are apparently too short, so you have to cut off the outer ends. I added the front and rear fenders and muffler covers with no problem. The rest of the parts went on without any difficulty. The headlights are rather strange, in that they are hollow and have lenses to put in them, but they are made out of regular plastic instead of clear. I can't complain, since I wanted to put MV lenses in, so I just enlarged the openings a little. I glued on the tow hooks and added a tow cable from my spares box.

Working on the turret

The turret was next and I started by gluing the periscopes in and the back piece, A31, on the turret rear. This piece is mislabeled as A33 and the real A33 is mislabeled as A31. As mentioned, my kit had some problems in the casting department. The first piece to show this was part A17, the guard over the periscope. It

had two legs poured short. Stretched sprue was used to replace the missing legs. And now for something a little strange. This version has two machine gun mounts for the turret. This is supposed to be on the early M41s, as far as I can tell from the Hunnicutt book. Unfortunately, even Hunnicutt does not mention the moving of the machine gun mounts. Although the instructions do not give you the option of putting the .50 cal mount in its correct place, you could easily mount it. The holes for the mounts are not drilled all the way through the turret. So you could put the mount on the left front of the commander's turret, but there is a small notch in the periscope cover that would have to be dealt with. I decided to follow the instructions and therefore drilled out the four holes for the two mounts.

The mount for the barrel was then put together and the turret top and bottom were glued together. The seam was very good and required no filling. I then glued all the handles and other small gadgets on the turret. The handles are much more accurate than the Skybow kit. These have the turned part that attaches to the turret, rather than butt-mounted. The barrel is turned aluminum, so no work here. The single baffle muzzle brake is two pieces that glue around a ridge on the barrel. Really cool stuff. Now for another nasty bit. As I mentioned, my kit suffered from poor casting. The bottom piece of my rear turret box had most of the bottom piece, A33, missing. I had to get some sheet styrene to fix it. The good news is it was the bottom, so it does not show much.

I assembled the .50 cal machine gun, which is quite nice. They



An overhead view of the AFV Club kit. The double white stripe is a Vietnamese marking, but I have no clue what it is for.

also give you the options of having either a box of open or closed ammunition. The bonus shield is a little strange. The sprue is marked M-88 and includes two hatches that I gather are for the M-88. The shield is pretty crude and I doubt that it is accurate. It is similar to the shields used on the M-113 ACAV. I could only find one drawing of a Vietnamese tank with a shield for its machine gun and it was not the same. The bottom line is, I hope you don't buy the kit for this bonus. I decided that I could live without this rather crude and very heavy cast piece.

Now the missing mantlet cover problem. I seriously thought about scratch building one and that would have been very difficult because of the complexity of the cover. I was still getting ready to try it when I noticed a post on the Internet about the South Vietnamese not always having the covers. Sure enough, after going through all my Vietnam reference sources, I found three different photos of M41A3's without covers. All were taken late in the war, so I was saved. I am sure some enterprising resin company will come out with a new cover for this kit very soon.

The tracks are almost identical to the Skybow's and are also glueable. I glued them together without any

difficulty. I wish I had the new individual link set they make, but for rubber band tracks they are not that bad.

Painting the AFV Club kit

After the usual wash, I sprayed the tank with Tamiya flat black as a base. As mentioned, because of the lack of a mantlet, I had decided to paint the model as a Vietnamese tank. Most references I found suggest khaki green as one of the colors they used. Although I saw them a number of times in 'Nam, I only remember that they were green and very rusty. So much for a vet's idea on paint colors! Anyway, I mixed Tamiya khaki, deep green and a touch of flat earth to come up with a khaki green color similar to the paints in the books I had. I then sprayed the tank and using a mask, painted the roadwheels with this color. I then used Vallejo paints on the detail parts like I did with the Skybow kit. I sprayed areas for the decals with Tamiya clear gloss. The tracks were threaded the same as the Skybow kit.

I put the decals on for a generic ARVN vehicle, which is pretty plain. The decals are really pretty bad. They are off register quite a bit and tear very easily. Normally, I would not have used them. It is too bad, because they have more interesting markings than the Skybow decals. I then sprayed the tank with Polly Scale clear flat. The wash and dry brushing were the same as I did on the Skybow kit, including the MV lenses.

External differences and comparing the kits

My main source for all the information on the M41 is the excellent Sheridan book written by R.P. Hunnicutt. Unfortunately, Hunnicutt does not distinguish externally between the four models M41, M41A1-4, which is understandable, since most items were internal. Nor does he say when the production switched from one model to the other. What he does is define changes based on the tank production numbers, which makes sense because these changes are apparently not necessarily tied to versions, but just improvements of the tank throughout its production.

Now, I do not consider myself an expert on the M41, so I based most of my information on this book. The following is a summary of the more significant external changes that can be observed during production, along with what the Skybow and AFV Club kits have included.

Turret

First, the Skybow kit has a standard late version turret. This includes the low weld line around the turret. The early version had a weld line that ran along the lower part of the turret but above the undercut. The AFV Club kit has the same weld lines as the Skybow kit, except the top of the turret has the original two-machine gun mount layout. One mount was on the right front of the commander's hatch and the other was to the left rear of his hatch. The sides of the early and late turret are very different, not only the weld-line differences, but also in storage. There were brackets on the both sides for spare tracks on the early version, which was replaced with handholds on the later version. To summarize, the Skybow and AFV Club have the same lower late model turret. It is just the roof that is different on the AFV Club kit, with the earlier configuration. There is a color photo in the back of Hunnicutt's book, which is printed backwards, that shows a M41 with the old turret roof and newer turret sides, but is labeled a late production M41. So who knows?

Suspension system

The suspension system is a little strange on the AFV Club kit. The idlers are correct for an earlier production version with the steel rim for tanks 1-2611. They were then switched to a rubber-rimmed version for tanks 2612 through 3475, as in the Skybow kit. Later production versions used a contoured rubber tired roadwheel. The return rollers on the first tanks were flat disc with rubber tires for tanks 1 through 3375 like the Skybow kits. These were then changed to contoured rubber tires beginning with 3376, like the AFV Club kit. Bottom line is the Skybow kit would represent a tank produced between 2612 and 3375, based on the suspension. On the AFV Club kit the suspension is a mix of old and new which should not be on the same tank. The idlers are from the early version tanks 1-2611 and return rollers are the late type, which did not show up until tank 3376.

The size thing

I know everyone is wondering about the measurements of these two guys. I personally believe if it looks right, then it is good enough for me. But for those nit-pickers out there, here are the numbers. I based the

measurements on the 1:48th scale drawings in the Hunnicutt book of the M41. I printed the plans out in 1:35th scale and measured the models based on this drawing.



Skybow Kit

Chassis length, fender end to fender end: exact
Chassis hull length: 1mm too long
Chassis width: exact
Chassis height: 1mm too high
Turret, tube to rear of turret: 2mm too long
Turret, width at widest part: 2mm too wide
Turret height: 2mm too short
I don't know about anyone else, but this is definitely close enough for me.



AFV Club

Chassis length, fender end to fender end: exact
Chassis hull length: 2mm too long
Chassis width: 2mm too wide
Chassis height: 1mm too short
Turret, tube to rear of turret: 6mm too short
Turret, width at widest part: 5mm too narrow
Turret height: 2mm too short
The only surprise here is that the turret is a little short and narrow, but otherwise the rest of the measurements are very close.

Fenders/tracks

Fenders were square on the original versions, but starting with 2593, the fenders were cut at an angle, as in both kits. The tracks used were originally the T91 single pin forged steel, but were finally replaced with the T91E3 single pin cast steel track. Both had removable rubber pads. As far as I know, there is no visual difference in these tracks. The kit's tracks are basically the same in both kits and the detail is very good for rubber band tracks.

Auxiliary Power Unit muffler

A small auxiliary power unit (APU) muffler was

originally placed on the right rear muffler in tanks 1368 thorough 2289, but was enlarged and then moved to the right front fender in tanks 2290 on. The original tanks did not have this muffler prior to tank 1368, just an exhaust pipe. Both kits have this muffler on the right rear, meaning they would fall between tanks 1368 to 2289, if all else was ignored.


Bottom Line

Skybow kit: This kit would represent a tank produced between 2612 and 3375, based on the suspension, but the APU muffler located on the right rear would not be on a version this late. To build this one correctly, you would need to scratch build a larger muffler and move it to the right front fender. The size, as far as I am concerned, is very close, so I don't see any problems here. Overall, this is an excellent kit. The construction was very easy and except for the missing step, there were no difficulties encountered.

AFV Club kit: This is really closer to an early version, starting with 2593-2611, because of the clipped fenders and the idlers. Even so, the APU still would have to be replaced like the Skybow's and you would have to replace the return rollers to make this work. The unknown factor here is the turret top, since I have no information on when it changed to the later type. The undersized turret is another problem.

The bottom line is both kits are flawed in accuracy and the AFV Club kit is flawed a little in size, but both also build into beautiful little models of a very important but unrepresented tank in this scale. Also correcting either one would not be very difficult and normally I would have done that myself. Ironically, the Skybow kit

was being initially billed as an M41A1, as marked on the sprues, but the AFV is probably closer to that version than the Skybow kit. The very old Tamiya kit was much worse and had almost no detail, plus being motorized. It does not even compare to either of these kits.

For my money, I would have to go with the Skybow kit because of size, price, mantlet cover and better casting. Actually, I think the only thing that the AFV Club kit has over the Skybow is the turned aluminum barrel. 

—Jim Hensley

MMIR RECCE

Skybow U.S. Light Tank M412A3 Walker Bulldog. Kit number TP3508. Kit graciously provided by the UK importer of Skybow, Accurate Armour. Suggested (estimated) retail price \$33.00. This kit is not yet available from a U.S. distributor, so the price is a bit of a guess.

AFV Club U.S. Light Tank M412A3 Walker Bulldog. Kit number AF 35041. Kit graciously provided by the U.S. importer of AFV Club, Marco Polo Imports. Suggested retail price \$39.98.

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